PRACTICAL SERMONS,

CHIEFLY ON THE

SECOND ADVENT

OF

OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A LECTURE ON ROMANISM.

BY

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"BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY: HOLD THAT FAST WHICH THOU HAST, THAT NO MAN TAKE THY CROWN."—REV. iii. 11.

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PREFACE.

THE following sermons were preached at Monmouth, between the years 1827 and 1868.

The Author's ministerial labours were brought to a close last year by reason of a severe attack of hooping-cough, from which he did not expect to recover. It has, however, pleased our gracious God and heavenly Father so to bless medical skill, and the fine and invigorating air of Weston-super-Mare, that he is now restored to health. His first employment, since his recovery, has been to revise those sermons.

Some of the sermons have reference to the Second Advent. The coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ in His kingdom, with power and great glory, is one of the precious truths made known in the Holy Scriptures. It is an article of the Christian faith, and it is the great and blessed hope of the Christian Church.

The Saviour says, "Surely I come quickly." May all His believing people, whom the apostle addresses as "elect of God, holy and beloved," joyfully exclaim, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

"Come out of Thy royal chambers, O Prince of all the kings of the earth, put on the visible robes of Thy imperial majesty. Take up that unlimited sceptre which Thy almighty Father hath bequeathed: for now the voice of Thy bride calls Thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed."

THE AUTHOR.

Belmont, Weston-super-Mare.

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I.

SIGNS OF THE COMING OF THE LORD.

"THERE SHALL BE SIGNS IN THE SUN, AND IN THE MOON, AND IN THE STARS; AND UPON THE EARTH DISTRESS OF NATIONS, WITH PERPLEXITY; THE SEA AND THE WAVES ROARING; MEN'S HEARTS FAILING THEM FOR FEAR, AND FOR LOOKING AFTER THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE COMING ON THE EARTH: FOR THE POWERS OF HEAVEN SHALL BE SHAKEN. AND THEN SHALL THEY SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY. AND WHEN THESE THINGS BEGIN TO COME TO PASS, THEN LOOK UP, AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS; FOR YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH." (Luke xxi. 25—28.)

THESE words form part of our blessed Lord's address to His disciples, when He replied to their questions respecting the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, and of His return to this earth in His glory and majesty. The former part of the chapter relates to the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, and the latter part to the coming of Christ in the kingdom of God; when all earthly rule shall cease, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. (Rev. xi. 15.) And as we are assured by historic testimony, and the testimony of existing facts, that every word uttered by the Lord Jesus respecting the destruction of Jerusalem and the dis-

persion of the Jewish nation has been fulfilled, so we may be assured that all which He declared respecting His coming again, the state of the world at the time of His coming, the awful destruction of the ungodly, and the supreme blessedness of His elect, will receive a similar and most exact accomplishment.

The certainty of this ought to be a warning to all who are out of Christ, living after the course of this evil world and without God; because the Lord Jesus will then be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire taking vengeance upon them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: and they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power. (2 Thess. i. 8, 9.) And it should have a deep and an abiding influence upon all who are born of God, taught and sanctified by the Holy Ghost; because the Lord Jesus will come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. (2 Thess. i. 10.) The coming of the Lord Jesus will be most fearful for the worldling, the infidel, the scoffer, the hypocrite, and it will be joyful beyond all conception for the true members of the Church of Christ—for those who are really born again of His Spirit,—because they shall then appear in glory with Christ in the kingdom of God.

The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the kingdom of God, and the commencement of the millennium, or thousand years of blessedness, and of rest and peace for the Church, are to be preceded by most awful judgments, which will totally destroy the idolatrous and apostate Church of Rome, the deniers and blasphemers

of the Godhead of our Lord and only Saviour Jesus Christ, and of all who are only nominal Christians. And when all these are destroyed, then the kingdom of God will appear, and the Son of man will be seen sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. (Mark xiv. 62.) All who have died in the Lord shall then be raised from the dead, and shall appear in glory. All the saints who shall be alive upon the earth shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and the whole elect body, the mystical body of Christ, the holy catholic Church, shall cease to be militant, fighting with the world, the flesh, and the devil; it shall then become triumphant, and shall reign with Christ in His heavenly kingdom.

These are the scriptural expectations of the Christian Church, and they are so awfully glorious, and will so certainly be realized, that all believers in the Lord Jesus should search the Scriptures with all diligence, in order to be well acquainted with them—to be influenced and animated by them, under all the trials and afflictions of life; and so much the more as we have the strongest reason to believe, both from the sure word of God, and also from the signs of the times, that ere long the kingdom of God will come, and His will shall be done in earth as it is done in heaven.

It was to this expectation—the expectation of the coming of our Lord, and of His reign in glory—that the apostles always directed the attention of believers, in order to support and comfort them under their manifold trials. St. Paul, in writing to Titus, says that "the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath

appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus ii. 11—14.) In writing to Timothy the apostle says, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. ii. 12.) And in writing to the Colossians he says, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (Col. iii. 4.) Saint John says, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John iii. 2.)

In the words of our text—words which were uttered by our blessed Lord and God and only Saviour Jesus Christ—there are three particulars which demand our attention:—1. The signs which are to precede and announce the speedy coming of the Son of man. 2. The power and great glory with which He shall appear. 3. The intense interest and joyful hope with which His people should observe those signs, knowing that their redemption draweth nigh.

1. We are to consider those signs which are to take place, and to announce the speedy coming of the Son of man. "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;" *i. e.*, changes and revolutions in states and kingdoms, which are represented by those symbols. As in the natural world, the sun, and moon,

and stars are the superior and most splendid bodies; so they are employed to represent, in the political firmament, kings and their ministers, princes and nobility, kingdoms and governments. And in these there shall be signs,—extraordinary and unexpected changes, which shall have the appearance of supernatural, rather than of natural and ordinary occurrences. "And upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity." In the midst of changes and revolutions of governments, trade, and commerce, and agriculture receive serious injuries; so as to occasion great distress; and where there is this distress, there will be perplexity, embarrassment, not knowing what to do.

There will be a difficulty in providing both for personal safety, and the necessary support of life. "The sea and the waves roaring." By these symbols the Scriptures represent people and nations; and in this passage they seem to mean the people, as contradistinguished from kings, and rulers, and governments. The people will be dissatisfied with their rulers, and dissatisfied with established institutions. And this dissatisfaction will express itself in such a terrific form, that it is represented by the sea and the waves roaring. And to any person, who has been at sea in a storm, it is needless to remark that, of all the terrible imagery that could be employed to represent those troubles which are coming on the earth, the imagery of our text is the most awful, the most appalling.

When the people, as in the present day, are educated, when knowledge is diffused in the cheapest and most attractive form,—when the steam-engine itself is em-

ployed in printing and spreading human knowledge,—as knowledge is power, we are placing in the hands of the people a power of incalculable magnitude. *Unless, then, the education given and the knowledge diffused are based upon the word of the living God,* teaching man from the time that he is capable of receiving instruction that he is a fallen, a guilty, and a lost sinner, for whom an atonement has been made by the blood of a divine Saviour, the Son of God; and that he needs to be regenerated and born anew by the Holy Ghost, that he needs to be enlightened, and taught, and upheld by the same gracious and almighty Spirit through the whole of his course in this world,—unless, I say, this be the character of our education, and of the knowledge which we impart, we are placing in the hands of the people a tremendous power, which will most certainly be employed against the peace, and safety, and well-being of society, and which will upheave from their foundations all our institutions, both political and ecclesiastical.

The knowledge of which man is really in want is that which has reference to the soul's health, as it is expressed in our Baptismal Service; and there is no danger to be apprehended from seeking the health of the soul. The danger lies entirely on the other side, in not seeking the health of the soul—in neglecting the soul—in giving it knowledge which is not good, and therefore cannot conduce to its health, and peace, and comfort, and salvation.

In the one case man is taught his entire dependence upon God for life, and health, and all things. He is taught that all power is of God, and that all power

among men is held immediately from God, and represents His authority in the earth; and hence man is taught, as a principle of duty and of conscience, to be subject unto the higher powers, in their various relations, whether as kings and magistrates, masters and fathers. In the other case man is taught nothing with reference to God, unless in an infidel manner. He hears of God, only as the God of nature—the God of man's infidel imagination, and not as the God of all grace, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is not taught his ruin, wretchedness, and guilt, as a lost creature and a sinner against God; he is not taught that nothing can save him from hell, but being washed from his sins in the blood of the Son of God; he is not taught that, except he be born again of water and of the Holy Ghost, he can never enter the kingdom of God; he is not taught that salvation is solely by grace, and only through faith, and that he that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. (John iii. 36.)

The former education is that which is according to the Bible, and which the Church of England recommends; the latter is that which the infidel recommends and patronizes, and which is now being diffused over so large a portion of the globe. It is this infidel education, and the knowledge which it communicates, that will vent themselves, as is expressed by "the sea and the waves roaring." When large masses of sinful and unruly men are taught to feel their power, without being taught to feel their dependence upon God and their

accountability to God, they will no longer endure those restraints which God and man have imposed; and hence there will be a powerful effort made to shake off the authority of both. There will be a loud cry for liberty and liberality, words which, in the mouth of men who have no fear of God, can have no other meaning than this,—liberty means licentiousness, or freedom to do mischief; and liberality means infidelity, or indifference to all religion. The consequence, then, necessarily will be, that when the authority of God and His delegated authority among men are renounced, confusion and anarchy and ruin must ensue.

That such a time, and such a state of things will certainly arrive is positively declared in the word of God. In the verses which follow the text it is said, "He spake to them a parable: Behold the fig tree, and all the trees, when they now shoot forth and bud, ye know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." These signs in the sun and moon and stars are as certain indications that the kingdom of God is nigh, as the budding of the fig tree and all the trees is an unerring proof of the approach of summer.

At such a crisis and under such circumstances, the Church of Christ will stand in need of all that support and consolation, which the sure word of prophecy and the Holy Ghost alone can impart: for the prophet Daniel says that at that period "there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." (Dan. xii. 1.) "Men's hearts

failing them for fear," says our Lord, "and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." When the powers of heaven are shaken, *i. e.*, the sun and moon and stars of the political firmament—thrones and governments, and all those institutions which are as it were the pillars of society, it will indeed be natural that men's hearts should fail them for fear.

The apostle Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy, writes expressly concerning this time of trouble, and paints in awful colours the hideous character of men. "This know also," he says, "that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." (2 Tim. iii. 1—5). And since men will be despisers of those who are good, and shall deny the power of godliness, those who are indeed good, having been made partakers of the grace of God, and do possess real godliness, may expect severe persecutions—persecutions, we are led to think, that will be of the most refined and unparalleled cruelty; and therefore our Lord concludes His address to His disciples with this important admonition:—"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

I shall hope, if the Lord permit, to resume this subject on another occasion, and would now earnestly press upon your attention those things which have been brought before you. We are told by our blessed Lord that there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, that there shall be upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; that men's hearts shall fail them for fear, looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And those symbols have been explained according to their acknowledged meaning in the word of God. That meaning is, that there shall be extraordinary changes and revolutions in states and kingdoms, in political and ecclesiastical institutions; that the people will be turbulent, and heady, and high-minded, fierce and unmanageable like the waves of the sea, and that consequently there will be distress, and perplexity, and fear, and consternation, looking after those things that are coming on the earth.

You are aware, my dear brethren, that there are extraordinary events occurring in the present day, that thrones and kingdoms are being shaken to their foundations, and that not by a foreign enemy, but by intestine commotion. You are aware that what is called the march of intellect—with which the growth of infidelity is rapidly advancing—has produced a frightful excitement of the public mind, and that we now seem to stand, as it were, upon a volcano, which is ready to burst beneath our feet. How these things will end is known only to God. It may be that order and

peace may be again restored before the last great storm, which shall sweep superstition, and infidelity, and ungodliness from off the face of the earth, and into the lowest depths of hell; or it may be God's purpose to shake all nations, every throne and every state and every institution, and that His Son should come with power and great glory to renovate a distracted world—to raise His saints, and establish the kingdom of God. Suppose this last great and glorious event to be near—suppose it to take place now, what is your character? What is your state? What is your hope?

The apostle Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, makes known the purpose for which the Lord is coming. He is coming to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and he is coming to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. Here then arises one question, and in the view of eternity and of the coming of our Lord it is the most important question that can engage our attention. Do you know God, and do you obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; or do you not? If you do know and love the Lord Jesus, He is coming to be glorified in you, and you will be glorified with Him; you shall appear with Him in glory, enjoying all the happiness that the God of love can bestow upon you and make you capable of enjoying; but if you do not know and love and serve the Saviour, then be assured that He is coming to take vengeance upon you, and to punish you with everlasting destruction. I would therefore call upon you, men and brethren, before the day of vengeance comes, to repent,

for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. I would call upon you, as Noah called upon the inhabitants of the old world, as Lot called upon the inhabitants of Sodom, and as the Lord Jesus called upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea. If you come to Christ, if you believe in Christ, if you are born again of the Spirit of Christ, then you are safe, and shall be safe for ever, if you hold fast your profession to the end. As Noah was saved—as Lot was saved—as the disciples were saved at the destruction of Jerusalem, so shall all be saved, during the approaching judgment and the burning of the world, who have been born again of the Spirit of God. The Lord himself has told us that He will send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now is the time to escape from the wrath to come; a little while—a very little while, and then will be seen the great white throne, and then there will be no refuge from the wrath of God and of the Lamb. Those who flee to the Lord Jesus Christ for refuge will find that He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him, and in faith and prayer they should commit themselves to His gracious keeping, and should give all diligence that they may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

II.

THE COMING OF THE LORD WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY.

"THERE SHALL BE SIGNS IN THE SUN, AND IN THE MOON, AND IN THE STARS; AND UPON THE EARTH DISTRESS OF NATIONS, WITH PERPLEXITY; THE SEA AND THE WAVES ROARING; MEN'S HEARTS FAILING THEM FOR FEAR, AND FOR LOOKING AFTER THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE COMING ON THE EARTH: FOR THE POWERS OF HEAVEN SHALL BE SHAKEN. AND THEN SHALL THEY SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY. AND WHEN THESE THINGS BEGIN TO COME TO PASS, THEN LOOK UP, AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS; FOR YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH." (Luke xxi. 25—28.)

WHENEVER it has pleased God to bring any signal or extraordinary judgments upon the earth on account of the wickedness of man, God has always given previous notice of such judgments, in order that the righteous might receive comfort, being assured of their preservation; and that the wicked might receive warning, being assured of their destruction. Before God destroyed the old world by the flood He gave sufficient notice of the approaching judgment. Noah was employed for one hundred and twenty years as a preacher of righteous-

ness; and while he was engaged in preparing the ark, he afforded positive evidence of his belief that God would most certainly execute His threatened vengeance; and therefore it is written of him, in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Before God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, He gave sufficient notice of the approaching judgment. St. Peter says that God delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked; for that righteous man, dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds. It is not indeed said that Lot was actually engaged as a preacher of righteousness, warning the inhabitants of the cities of the plain, though it is probable that he was so engaged. This, however, is certain, that as a man of God, in the midst of abounding wickedness, his example alone must have been a powerful remonstrance, as well as an explicit warning. Before God destroyed the city and temple of Jerusalem, and scattered the Jewish nation to the four winds of heaven, He gave sufficient notice of the approaching judgment; and by the ministry of John the Baptist, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of His apostles, He called upon all men to repent and to believe the gospel. And when the Jews had filled up the measure of their iniquities by crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ, by persecuting His apostles, and by rejecting the mercy

and the grace of God, then wrath came upon them to the uttermost. The Roman armies encompassed Jerusalem, and the little flock of believers, having escaped to the mountains, was preserved from the most awful calamities with which God has ever punished any nation. In like manner it has pleased God to make known that there will be a great and terrible judgment at the coming of His Son, the second time, with power and great glory. And He has made us acquainted with certain signs which are to announce the coming of the Lord, and to be the signal for hope to the righteous and of warning to the wicked. The signal for hope to the righteous, because then their redemption draweth nigh, then the kingdom of God is at hand, and the Lord Jesus is coming to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. And the signal for warning to the wicked, because the great day of wrath is at hand, and the Lord Jesus will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

In directing your attention to those subjects, on last Sunday I took occasion from the words of our text to select these three particulars for our consideration:—1. The signs which are to take place and announce the speedy coming of the Son of man. 2. The power and great glory with which the Son of man shall appear. 3. The intense interest and joyful hope with which the Lord's people should observe those signs, knowing that

their redemption draweth nigh. With respect to the signs which are to take place and announce the speedy coming of the Son of man, the symbols of the text were explained as signifying extraordinary changes and revolutions in states and kingdoms. And that in consequence of an *infidel education*, the people possessing the faculty to read, and being abundantly supplied with seditious, and immoral, and infidel publications, extensively diffused at a low price, in a popular and attractive style, the public mind would be so much excited, and the evil passions of men so much inflamed, that they would become restless, and dissatisfied, and clamorous for an imaginary good; and that this dissatisfaction would express itself in such a terrific form, that it is represented by the symbol of the sea and the waves roaring. This was the first part of our subject, to which your attention was then directed. The next which we are to consider is the power and great glory with which the Son of man shall then appear. The language of our text is "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." When our Lord ascended into heaven, we are told that He was taken up from His disciples, and a cloud received Him out of their sight; and while they stood gazing up into heaven two men stood by them in white apparel, who said, This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven. Our Lord himself declared to the Jewish high priest, "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." And St. John says, in Rev. i., "Behold, He cometh with

clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. This description of the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, is similar to that which the prophet Daniel has given, in the seventh chapter of his prophecies; he says, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him, and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." It is quite evident that this description refers not to our Lord's first, but to His second coming; and it is plainly declared that at His next coming, He shall have a kingdom on this earth, and that all nations shall serve and obey Him. It is for the coming of this kingdom that the Saviour has taught us to pray, when we say, "Thy kingdom come." The Scriptures speak in the most magnificent terms of the happiness of that heavenly kingdom, which is to be established when the Son of man shall come with power and great glory; when, as St. John says, the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever. Our Lord will exercise almighty power, and will appear in all the glory of God, when He shall be revealed from heaven. With that power He will raise His saints, and they shall live and reign with Him in this world, where both He and they have been rejected, and despised, and persecuted; then the noble army of

martyrs shall receive an abundant recompence for all the mocking and scourging, and torture which they endured for Christ's sake and His gospel. With that power the Lord Jesus will destroy all His enemies who would not have Him to reign over them. All false and hypocritical professors shall then be destroyed. The tares shall be gathered, bound in bundles, and burned. With that power He will destroy the apostate and idolatrous Church of Rome, that church which, in Rev. xvii., is represented by the symbol of a woman, and is spoken of in these words,—"The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hands full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications. And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." With that power our Lord will restore His ancient people, the Jews, to their own land. The Redeemer will then come out of Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and then shall Judah rejoice and Israel shall be glad. And then will be the season of grace and mercy for all the heathen.

It is to this time, when the Son of man shall come with power and great glory, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in His glorious majesty, and when He shall reign upon this earth, that all the prophets have looked forward, and it is the happiness of that time that they have celebrated with such joyful exultation; and as the whole creation (which, on account of

man's sin, is now groaning and travailing in pain) shall then be delivered from the bondage of corruption, therefore, the whole creation is called upon to rejoice. "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord: for He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth." "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof. O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvellous things: His right hand and His holy arm hath gotten Him the victory. The Lord hath made known His salvation, His righteousness hath He openly showed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered His mercy and His truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God."

These are some of the great and glorious events which the sure word of prophecy leads us to expect, when the Son of man shall come with power and great glory; and, therefore, so truly blessed will His coming be for all His people, that whatever judgment may now come upon the earth, and however severe the trials to which they themselves may be exposed, yet they have most abundant reason to rejoice and be glad.

This leads me to the last part of our subject,—the intense interest and joyful hope, with which all the Lord's people should observe these signs, knowing that their redemption draweth nigh. The Church of Christ has the most splendid, the most sublime hope and ex-

pectation set before it, and these hopes and expectations have been its great stay and support in the midst of unnumbered trials and afflictions and temptations, and when it has been subject to the most severe persecutions. The Church of Christ has the hope of perfect deliverance from all enemies, and it has the hope of the full and perpetual enjoyment of all consummate blessedness; and the word of God does plainly mark the time when these hopes and expectations shall be realized. That time will be when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, when the dead bodies of the saints shall be raised incorruptible, and when the saints who shall be alive shall be changed and clothed with spiritual, and immortal, and glorified bodies. Hence the word of God invariably directs all believers to look for the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; and teaches us that with His coming there are connected all the hopes and expectations of the Church. That the hopes of the Church are connected with the coming of the Lord Jesus is evident, from the plain and obvious meaning of the whole of the word of God.

In writing to the Philippians the apostle Paul says, "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." In writing to the Colossians he says, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." In writing to the Thessalonians, in his first Epistle he speaks of waiting for the Son of God from heaven, of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints; and that the

Lord will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: and then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we be ever with the Lord. In his second Epistle he speaks of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of our gathering together unto Him; when with the brightness of His coming the Lord shall destroy the man of sin, the son of perdition, by which term Protestant commentators understand the Papacy, the apostate Church of Rome; and, finally, that the hopes of the Church of Christ are connected with the coming of the Lord Jesus is further evident from the description of the destruction of Antichrist which is given in Rev. xix., for it is immediately on the destruction of Antichrist, the apostate Church of Rome, and all apostates, that the martyrs and all who sleep in Jesus are raised from the dead, and live and reign with Christ a thousand years. This resurrection from the dead, this reign with Christ, and the consummation and bliss both of body and soul in God's eternal and everlasting glory, are what I understand by the redemption which draweth nigh.

That the hopes of the whole world are also connected with the coming of the Lord Jesus is equally evident. With respect to the Jewish nation it is expressly said that when the Redeemer shall come out of Zion, then He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And the apostle shows in Rom. xi. that as the Jews were cast off at the first advent, because they rejected Christ; so they shall be received and restored at the second advent, and

shall then say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him." And in Psa. cii. it is said, "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory;" thus connecting the restoration of Israel with the Lord's appearing in glory, when, as in our text, the Son of man shall come with power and great glory. And that the hopes of the heathen—all who have not hitherto received the faith of Christ—are connected with the coming of the Lord Jesus is evident from the same Psalm (cii.), for after declaring, "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come," the prophet adds, "So [in consequence of this] the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth Thy glory;" most manifestly showing that it is when God bringeth back the captivity of His people that all kings and all heathen nations shall worship and serve the Lord of hosts, as is declared in Psa. lxxii., and also in Isa. lx. Nothing can be conceived more excellent and valuable for the purpose of instructing and of imparting certain and sufficient consolation to the Church of God, than what St. Peter calls the sure word of prophecy, because whatever it declares will surely be accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. Hence the importance of St. Peter's language respecting prophecy in his second Epistle at the close of the first chapter. He wrote to the believers of his time, and what he wrote for their instruction he has written for ours. The word of God in the Church, like the sun in the heavens, is a light for all nations and for all ages. At the sixteenth verse the apostle writes, "We

have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty." The apostle here refers to the transfiguration on the mount, which was a typical representation of the glory and majesty in which the Lord Jesus Christ will appear, when He shall be revealed from heaven with all His saints. He adds, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy;" and here he is supposed to refer to the Revelation of St. John. It was the opinion of Sir Isaac Newton, and also of Bishop Newton and other eminent commentators on the Holy Scriptures, that the Revelation of St. John was given to the Church before either St. Paul or St. Peter wrote their epistles; and that there are many allusions in their epistles to the sublime and glorious expectation of the Church, so plainly announced by St. John, when the enemies of God shall be destroyed, and the martyrs and saints shall rise from the dead and reign with Christ in His heavenly kingdom. "We have," the apostle says, "a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the daystar arise in your hearts." The word of prophecy is here denominated "a light," and it is said that believers do well in taking heed to it. The word of God is their only safe guide and infallible director. It is like the pillar of fire to the Israelite, when journeying through the wilderness towards the promised land; and as that pillar of fire was a cloud and darkness to the Egyptians, but gave light to the Israelites, so the sure word of prophecy is a light to the righteous, but dark-

ness to the wicked; and therefore the prophet Daniel says in the last chapter of his prophecies, "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." Those, then, who are wise, not with the wisdom of this world, that is foolishness with God, but with that wisdom, which is by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, should take warning from this circumstance, namely, that those prophetic numbers which were to be the measure of time until the second coming of our Lord, are now, it is generally supposed, nearly fulfilled; and this fact, combined with the signs brought before us in our text, should be regarded by them with intense interest and joyful hope, so that they should look up and lift up their heads, knowing that their redemption draweth nigh.

This expectation ought, indeed, to have a great influence upon all who know the Lord, who have been brought out of darkness into light, that knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light; let us walk honestly, or decently, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." The coming of our Lord is compared to travail coming upon a woman with child, and a more just comparison could not possibly be found; because while there is no event in nature more certain as to its accomplishment, there is no event,

more uncertain as to the precise time; and therefore, although the sure word of prophecy does fix upon a certain period, and the signs of which our Lord has spoken are to announce His speedy coming with power and great glory, yet He himself says, "Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the time is." Hear, then, my brethren, the words of the apostle with which I shall conclude:—"Of the times and the seasons ye have no need that I write unto you, for ye yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of the light and of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another." (2 Thess. v. 1—11.)

III.

PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF THE LORD.

CHRISTIAN DUTIES TO BE OBSERVED.

"TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES, LEST AT ANY TIME YOUR HEARTS BE OVERCHARGED WITH SURFEITING, AND DRUNKENNESS, AND CARES OF THIS LIFE, AND SO THAT DAY COME UPON YOU UNAWARES. FOR AS A SNARE SHALL IT COME ON ALL THEM THAT DWELL ON THE FACE OF THE WHOLE EARTH. WATCH YE THEREFORE, AND PRAY ALWAYS, THAT YE MAY BE ACCOUNTED WORTHY TO ESCAPE ALL THESE THINGS THAT SHALL COME TO PASS, AND TO STAND BEFORE THE SON OF MAN." —Luke xxi. 34—36.

ON the last two Sundays I addressed you, my dear brethren, on a most important portion of the word of God, and if it pleased God to impart to you the light and power of His Spirit, you must have seen and felt its importance. Many, indeed, hear of the approaching judgment without being influenced by what they hear; but so it was in the days of Noah, and so it was in the days of Lot; and we are assured that so it will be in the day when the Son of man will be revealed. Noah was a preacher of righteousness to the men of his generation, and both by his preaching, and by his pre-

paration of the ark, sufficient warning was given of the approaching judgment; yet Noah alone found grace in the eyes of the Lord. The men of the world were too much engaged in the business and pleasures of this life, to pay any attention to his warning voice; and therefore, they knew not until the flood came and took them all away. When God was about to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot went out and spake to his sons-in-law, and said, "Up, get ye out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law." And with reference to the time in which we live, we are expressly assured by the apostle Peter that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. That is, they will deny that there ever was such an awful catastrophe as the flood; and therefore, they will deny that it was a type of the more awful and now impending judgment. Oh, how fearfully men are blinded by Satan, the god of this world! and what an unspeakable blessing it is to find grace and mercy, like Noah and like Lot, in the eyes of the Lord!

It is with reference to this judgment and the coming of the Son of man, that our blessed Lord addresses to us the words of our text, and requires of us temperance, watchfulness, and prayer. He tells us that He will come with power and great glory, that there will be a great shaking of all nations, with fear and perplexity, and distress; and that when these things begin

to come to pass, we are to be assured that our redemption draweth nigh, and that the kingdom of God is at hand. And so dreadful and overwhelming will be the destruction, which will come upon all apostates, all infidels, all ungodly professors, all who walk after the usts of the flesh in all uncleanness; all who are addicted to sensuality, gluttony, drunkenness, lewdness, lying, thieving, Sabbath-breaking, evil-speaking, and covetousness, that we are admonished to take heed lest we should be found indulging in those enormous evils, forgetting that the Lord is at hand, that the Judge standeth before the door, and so that day should come upon us unawares; for as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth. That day will come as a snare, suddenly and unexpectedly. There will, indeed, be previous signs and intimations of its approach; but the majority of men will not regard them as the harbingers of the coming of the day of God. They may occasion distress, and disquietude, and fearful apprehensions; but various means will be found and employed to drown reflection and to lull suspicion. The pleasures and business of the world will be eagerly pursued, and it will be confidently said, that all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation; that there is no real cause for alarm; and that there is no more reason for expecting the Son of man now than at any other period. In opposition to those assertions, which, so far as they have influence, must mislead and deceive, it is our duty to tell you, my brethren, that all real Christians who have examined the Holy Scriptures are decidedly of

opinion, that, we are now rapidly approaching that period when a great change is to be expected; and that of the number of those who entertain this opinion many do believe that, the change will consist in the fall of the mystical Babylon—the Church of Rome, in the restoration of the Jewish people to their own land, in the resurrection of the saints, the destruction of the wicked, and the coming of the Son of man with power and great glory. And hence it is that we should observe passing events with a most watchful eye, to see if we can discern those signs of the times, which are to announce the speedy coming of the Son of man; and if we do discern them, then we should look up and lift up our heads, for our redemption draweth nigh. But those interesting subjects have been already considered.

It is now our business to give attention to the important admonition contained in our text. "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

Temperance, watchfulness, and prayer are the three Christian duties here enjoined; and the influence which these have upon the Christian's faith, walk, and conversation are of incalculable importance. And they are so closely connected that not one of them can be in vigorous and healthful exercise, unless the others are

maintained in the same state. 1. Prayer. If we would have real communion with God by prayer, and supplication, and thanksgiving; if we would have free and constant access to Him, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; if we would come to Him with all the confidence of children, and call Him our Father, and make known to Him all our wants, and trials, and difficulties, and temptations; and if we would commit our way unto Him, and cast our care upon Him, with full assurance of faith, and expect, without any failure, a free, and full, and rich blessing, the light of His countenance, the forgiveness of all our sins, negligences, and ignorances; if we would have Him for our hiding-place in the time of trouble, for a refuge until these calamities be overpast; then it is necessary to watch, to be awake to the value and importance of spiritual and heavenly things, to be fully awake to the riches of the grace and mercy of our heavenly Father in Christ, fully awake to the value of all the spiritual blessings with which God has blessed us in His Son—namely, our election, our redemption, our adoption, our justification, our sanctification, and the hope of the full and undisturbed and perpetual enjoyment in the world to come, of such good things as the eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, and the heart of man hath not conceived. If we would pray in faith, pray in the Holy Ghost, wrestle successfully, as the Scriptures say, with God until we obtain a blessing for time and for eternity; if we would have a constant and lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, assuring us of the forgiveness of our sins; and if we would have (and this

blessing is more to be desired than all things beneath the sun)—if we would have the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, filling the heart and mind, refreshing the conscience, rejoicing the soul, keeping it in the knowledge and the love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, then it is most necessary to watch unto prayer. "Pray always," the Scriptures say; "Pray without ceasing," the Scriptures say; "Praying always with all prayer," the Scriptures say. "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint," says the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, what losers men are by the neglect of prayer! They are as it were famishing in the midst of plenty; for God is the fountain of all goodness, and it is by prayer that we make our requests known unto God. It is most true, as the Lord Jesus says, that He does manifest Himself unto His own people as He does unto the world, and therefore, all His people should learn to be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to let their requests be made known unto God; and then, as certainly as God has said it, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

2. In order "to pray acceptably and effectually, in order to enjoy all the privileges and blessings connected with prayer, it is necessary to exercise watchfulness. Our Lord says, "Watch;" and this charge implies that there are good things to be guarded, and defended, and preserved, and evil things to be opposed. And so it is in the life of every real Christian. The things revealed in God's word, the things which are freely given to us of

God, the things which belong to the soul, the things which are in Christ Jesus, the treasury of all grace and all mercy, are good, supremely good; and these things cannot be clearly perceived and fully enjoyed in this life without unremitting watchfulness; for there are innumerable evil things which set themselves in direct opposition to all those good things of God. There is the flesh, and all its lusts, which war against the soul; there is the world, and all its cares, which would leave no time for the things of God; and there is the devil, who employs both the world and the flesh, together with all his own evil suggestions, to drown men in destruction and perdition. There are duties to be discharged; there are temptations to be resisted; there are means of grace to be used; and all under the conviction that the time allotted is short, and that "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Hence the necessity for watchfulness, for diligence, for circumspection. We know not at what moment we may see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory—when we shall hear the voice of the archangel and the trump of God filling the whole expanse of heaven with their awful sounds. And who can conceive the consternation and horror which shall then seize upon all who shall be found living after the flesh, and after the world, and in the service of the devil, and without God.

There is indeed an absolute necessity to watch; for there is in all a most fearful tendency to grow cold, and indifferent, and insensible to those things which, above all others, should employ the faculties, and call forth the energies, and arouse the attention of man. Is not the

soul the most noble part of man? Are not eternity and its concerns of more consequence than the concerns of time? Is not the favour of God more to be desired than the favour of man? And, though it will be admitted that these things are so, yet is it not true that most men act as if the body, and this world, and the favour of man were the chief objects of regard? It is because of this evil tendency of their fleshly nature, that God's children are incessantly called upon, in the Holy Scriptures, to watch and to pray, lest they enter into temptation. The apostle Paul says, "Watch ye; stand fast in the faith, quit you like men; be strong." Again he says, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." And our Lord addresses the church at Sardis in these words: "I know thy works; that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard; and hold fast and repent. If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Together with, 3, prayer and watchfulness, our Lord enjoins temperance. "Take heed to yourselves," He says, "lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life; and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth."

An undue attention to the wants of the body, and to the cares of this life, is what chiefly marks a worldly

man; a man who lives without God, and only for the things of time and sense.

In all such persons, though there may not be any apparent excess, still the heart is overcharged; it is loaded with the things of the flesh—its lusts, its pleasures, its cares—so that the heart never can rise heavenward. There is no longing desire for glory, honour, and immortality; no love for God, no faith in Jesus, no joy of the Holy Ghost. We should take most diligent heed to ourselves, lest this should be our state, and lest that day should come upon us unawares. We should remember that we all have been dedicated to God by the ordinance of Baptism; and that we have promised to renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; and we should remember that our Master has plainly told us that we cannot serve God and mammon. And the apostle John says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

May it please God of His great goodness to impress these important subjects upon our minds; may He show us that we are indeed unprofitable servants, and may He show to us His own free and rich mercy, forgiving all our sins through the plenteous redemption which is in the Lord Jesus Christ. And let us remember for our

great comfort that "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us; that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." (1 Thess. v. 9, 10.)

Our Lord enjoins temperance, watchfulness, and prayer upon all who bear His name; and this He does by saying, "Take heed to yourselves. The mind must be turned inward upon itself, and not outward upon the vanities of the world. It must be the subject of constant prayer to God, that we may indeed and at all times, take heed to ourselves; and that He would incline and enable us to be temperate, watchful, and prayerful. We should pray that God would preserve us from surfeiting and drunkenness, and from being carried away with the stream of ungodliness, which is sweeping downward to the gulf of perdition, the ungodly and the sinner. The Lord Jesus tells us that the day of His coming will be as a snare, unto all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth; that is, upon all the ungodly, who will not take heed to themselves; but, on the contrary, will be living prayerless and careless, in pleasure and in intemperance, and who will slight and despise all admonition. All such persons shall then be taken, as in a snare from which they cannot escape, and shall fall under the wrath of Almighty God. My brethren, our Lord and Saviour does most graciously give us these warnings, and desires us to pray that, we may be accounted worthy to escape all those things which shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Let us all, then, go to Him, and be washed in His most precious blood from all our sins; and let us believe

that all our sins are forgiven us, by God's mercy through Christ. And then, if found watching, and waiting, and doing our Master's will, the destroying angel will pass over us, as he passed over the Israelites in Egypt, whose houses were sprinkled with the blood of the paschal lamb; and instead of those fearful words, "Depart from Me, ye cursed," we shall hear Him say, "Come, ye blessed children of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

To conclude. Finally observe, my brethren, what our Lord says. His words, indeed, deserve to be well pondered by every child of God; He does not say, lest at all times, but "lest at any time, your hearts should be overcharged." It is not possible for any child of God to live in this state at all times—that is the miserable condition of those who know not God—but it is very possible that, the children of God may be in this state at some time: and here is the danger, this is what they are to guard against, and watch against, and pray against; because if it should happen but once, that is the very time when that day may come upon them.

They are then to take heed and to watch that it may never happen; and to pray always, that they may be accounted worthy to escape all those things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. And they should pray also for the universal Church; they should beseech God to keep His Church with His perpetual mercy; and because the frailty of man, without Him, cannot but fall; that He would keep us ever by His help from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

IV.

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED AND THE SECURITY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

"COME, MY PEOPLE, ENTER THOU INTO THY CHAMBERS, AND SHUT THY DOORS ABOUT THEE: HIDE THYSELF FOR A LITTLE MOMENT, UNTIL THE INDIGNATION BE OVERPAST. FOR, BEHOLD, THE LORD COMETH OUT OF HIS PLACE, TO PUNISH THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH FOR THEIR INIQUITY: THE EARTH SHALL DISCLOSE HER BLOOD, AND SHALL NO MORE COVER HER SLAIN."—(Isaiah xxvi. 20, 21.)

ON several occasions I have directed your attention, my dear friends, to the second coming of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as to an event which is most glorious in itself, and which will affect the whole family of man. The view which our martyred reformers entertained as to the importance of this great and glorious event, and the duty of bringing it before all our congregations, is quite evident, from the services which they appointed for the four Sundays in Advent. They have taken occasion from the near approach of that season of the year, when we commemorate the first advent of our blessed Lord, to direct the attention of

all the members of our Church to His second advent, when He shall come in His glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead. The first lesson for the morning and evening service on each of the four Sundays in Advent, together with the collect, epistle, and gospel, have a reference, more or less direct, to the second coming of our Lord. It is well and interesting to observe the order of events, as successively brought before us in the portions of Scripture that are taken from the prophet Isaiah. On the first Sunday we are made acquainted with great and glorious promises respecting the last days, when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains: that is, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. On the second we hear the note of preparation, and the mighty stir which prevails. We hear the Lord making the earth empty, and making it waste, and turning it upside down, and scattering abroad the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant. On this Sunday, we have brought before us a sublime song of praise, in which the prophet celebrates the great goodness of the Lord, for His counsels of faithfulness and truth, in bringing to utter destruction all His enemies; and he proclaims that the Lord will make a feast for His people. And this can be no other than the feast or marriage supper of the Lamb. That He will swallow up death in victory, and take away the reproach of His people from off all the earth. And then, on the fourth Sunday, when the purpose of God is

accomplished, it is said,—"Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment." Thus carrying forward our minds to that glorious period, and glorious state of the Church here upon earth, when the Lord Jesus, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, shall come in His glory and His majesty, and when He and His saints shall reign in righteousness and in judgment in the kingdom of God. While it is probable that those prophecies, to use the language of the great Lord Bacon, had their germinant and springing seasons, in ages now long since past, in the destruction of the Assyrian and Babylonish monarchies, and other persecutors of God's ancient people, the Jews; and in the restoration of His people to their own land after the seventy years' captivity in Babylon; yet it is most certain that, it is to the close of the present dispensation that we are to look for their full and final and glorious accomplishment. That those prophecies refer to the period of the second advent of the Lord Jesus, and that the feast which God will make for His people is to be made here upon earth, are truths expressly declared in those chapters, and explained and confirmed by other portions of the Word of God. There are many marks afforded in those chapters, which enable us with perfect certainty to identify both place and time. 1. With respect to place it is said, in chap. xxv., verse 6, "In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." And the words "this mountain," refer to the mountain of which the prophet had just spoken

in the last verse of the former chapter, where he says, "The Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously;" and 2, with respect to time, in verse 8 of the same chapter, the prophet says, "He will swallow up death in victory." And this victory over death will take place at the resurrection of the saints, as is declared in 1 Cor. xv. 54, where the apostle is describing the glory of that resurrection, makes an express quotation of this language of the prophet, and says, "then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written. Death is swallowed up in victory." And further, this resurrection is identified with the coming of the Lord Jesus: for in 1 Thess. iv. 16 it is said, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

This brief view of those passages of Scripture, shows to us what the expectations of the Christian Church are, and teaches us to look forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of His saints, the establishment of His kingdom, the manifestation of His glory, and the enjoyment of a feast, which the Lord of Hosts will make on Mount Zion, as the end and consummation of the present dispensation. And as these great, and blessed, and glorious events are to be preceded and ushered in by most fearful judgments amongst men, it has therefore pleased God, for the support and comfort of His people, to give them seasonable intimation of those judgments, and to address them in the tender and affectionate language of our text,

"Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood and shall no more cover her slain."

Our attention will be directed to these two particulars,—1st, The punishment which is coming upon the inhabitants of the earth; and 2nd, the security of God's people.

1. The whole volume of divine truth bears one uniform testimony that the Lord will most surely come out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth, on account of their iniquity. This iniquity soon showed itself after the fall of man and spread itself over the face of the earth; and even before the flood it is said by the apostle Jude that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of the destruction of wicked and ungodly men, saying, "Behold the Lord cometh, with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." The extreme indignation of God against sin was manifested by the flood, when, with the exception of eight persons, God destroyed the whole race of mankind. But neither that fearful display of divine indignation, nor the many indications which have been afforded of it in every age since, by war, and famine, and pestilence, have had any saving

and lasting [illegible] of the earth. Every succeeding generation of men is [illegible] the exact likeness of that which preceded it, and its moral deformity, the same enmity against God, the same opposition to His truth, the same hatred of the Lord, the same love of spiritual darkness, and the same oppression and persecution of His people; in this succession of generations shall not always continue. This enmity against God and oppression of His people shall speedily come to an end. God has determined the precise period when the Lord shall come out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, when the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. The burden of those prophecies is the utter destruction, the total excision of all the enemies of God; and those especially are brought prominently forward, who possessed great power and were the unrelenting oppressors and persecutors of the people of God. Ancient Babylon, and Rome—both in its pagan and papal state—are marked out in God's word as entitled to this sad pre-eminence; and their claim to it has been fully proved, by the testimony of unnumbered acts of cruelty and oppression towards God's people, and which have been faithfully recorded on the page of history. We know what the fate of one city (Babylon) has been, as declared by the God of heaven and earth, and we are sure that the destruction pronounced upon the other city (Rome) will be as certain, and that it is now rapidly approaching. Read the latter part of the 13th chapter of Isaiah, in which God denounces the destruction of Babylon; and read the account of any modern

traveller in the East, and you will see how fearfully God has executed the denunciations of His wrath in the overthrow of that proud oppressor of His people.

As Babylon was the great persecutor of the people of God in the nation of Israel, so Rome, the mystical Babylon of the New Testament, has been the great persecutor of the people of God in the Christian Church. And as the judgments denounced by God have been executed upon the one, so the judgments denounced by God shall assuredly be executed upon the other. The fall of Rome is declared and decreed by Almighty God; she is marked out and foredoomed of God to destruction. And hence, in the description which is given of her destruction in Rev. xviii., God's people are addressed in language corresponding with our text: "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

What, it may be asked, have been her sins, which have thus reached unto heaven? She has usurped for her bishop the place, power, and authority of God. She

has corrupted (Gen. iii.) the Holy Scriptures, and withheld them from the people; she has erased from the decalogue one of those commandments, which had been written by the finger of God; she has taught the sufficiency of human merit, to the disparagement of divine grace; she has exalted the sacrifice of the mass, and lowered, and degraded, and blasphemed the all-perfect and all-sufficient sacrifice of the Son of God; she has kept men in ignorance, where the interests of their immortal souls were concerned. She has opposed and suppressed the truth, and intruded the Virgin Mary between the sinner and the Saviour. And all her unscriptural opinions and unlawful assumptions she has maintained, not by arguments drawn from the Word of God, but by the traditions of men and the fires of the Inquisition; that dreadful engine of papal power. And these are her sins; these, these are her iniquities, which have reached unto heaven. God has remembered them, and God will come down in His indignation and punish her for them; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

It was pagan Rome that destroyed the city and temple of Jerusalem, and sent the Jewish people as captives into all nations. And Papal Rome has continued to oppress the Jews, wherever her power could extend; but the time is rapidly drawing near when Rome shall be destroyed. And then Israel will be restored and Jerusalem shall be rebuilt; and "in that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city, salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah

is everlasting strength. For He bringeth down them that dwell on high: the lofty city He layeth it low; He layeth it low, even to the ground; He bringeth it even to the dust. The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor and the steps of the needy." At the 13th verse the people of God say, in reference to their cruel tyrants and oppressors, "O Lord our God, other Lords beside Thee have had dominion over us; but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name. They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise; therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish. And when at verses 17, 18, they had expressed their earnest and even painful desires to be delivered, God then graciously comforts His people, with the promise of the resurrection, and with the hope of the Lord's coming; with the punishment of the inhabitants of the earth; with the avenging of the blood of His saints, which has been shed, and with the certainty of their own sure preservation. "Thy dead," He says, "shall live, with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead," the oppressors and persecutors of God's people. "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

These, my dear friends, are the true sayings of God. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but His word shall not pass away. He has declared beforehand for the support and comfort of His people the things which shall most surely come to pass; and His people, on comparing with these His declarations, the extraordinary events which have taken place—since the beginning of the first French revolution—and which are still taking place, are led to conclude (and in this conclusion there is great unanimity amongst the learned and the good in the Church of Christ,) that we are now upon the eve of some great change: and when we examine the prophetic Scriptures, the change, which we are taught to expect, appears to consist in those great and glorious and even awful events, the coming of the Lord Jesus in His glorious Majesty; the destruction of the apostate Church of Rome, and of all who know not God and who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; the restoration of the Jewish people to their own land, and the resurrection and reign of the saints upon earth.

With reference to this change and these expectations let me now ask you a few questions, my brethren, reserving the other part of our subject for next Sunday. You cannot fail to have remarked the distinction in our text between God's people and the inhabitants of the earth. And I would ask you, to which class do you belong? We all indeed are inhabitants of the earth, but God's people are so few compared with the many who walk in the broad way, and whose end is destruction, that the one is plainly distinguished from the other.

Have you, my brethren, been brought out of that broad way, and into the narrow way, which leadeth unto life? Have you been brought to know God and His Son Jesus Christ? Have you obtained faith and repentance unto life? Have you been born of God's spirit? Have you had the love of God shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto you? Have you peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God? These are some of the marks of God's people—some of the privileges and blessings which they enjoy; and it is the possession of these blessings which assures them that they are God's faithful and elect people.

It is the assured possession of these blessings, which can make a man really happy in the midst of trials, and cares, and afflictions; and without them, whatever a man may possess, and though he may be exempt from outward trouble; it is not possible for him to be happy.

These blessings, I say, make a man happy in this life; and the possession of them is a certain pledge of everlasting happiness in the life to come. Those who possess them may look forward without dismay, with joy and exultation to the coming of the Lord Jesus in His glorious Majesty: for though it is said that He shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; yet it is also expressly said that, He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. Would it not then be well to have the hope of being

numbered with His saints in glory everlasting, and to have all that experience of its blessedness which is enjoyed by God's people, and which is as a feast of fat things? When it pleases God to open a man's eyes to see his own sinful and guilty state, and to see that there is full salvation, and plenteous redemption, and forgiveness of sins in the Lord Jesus Christ (through God's rich mercy and everlasting grace); and when, through faith in the Saviour's blood, he finds that which makes him really happy, and which puts a new song into his mouth, even praise and thanksgiving unto our God; he will then cease to be numbered amongst the inhabitants of the earth, he will be rejected by those who are still in darkness, as a person who is altogether strange, and singular, and enthusiastic; but he will be numbered with God's people, sealed with God's Spirit, and filled with God's love; he will be preserved by God's power, made wise with God's wisdom, strengthened with God's grace, and refreshed with God's comfort; and in the day when the Lord will come with indignation to punish the inhabitants of the earth, all who are now looking for His coming shall lift up their heads with joy, and say, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

N.B.—For another Sermon on same subject, see page 135.

V.

THE TRIAL AND TRIUMPH OF A CHILD OF GOD.

"THOU SHALT GUIDE ME WITH THY COUNSEL, AND AFTERWARD RECEIVE ME TO GLORY. WHOM HAVE I IN HEAVEN BUT THEE? AND THERE IS NONE UPON EARTH THAT I DESIRE BESIDE THEE. MY FLESH AND MY HEART FAILETH: BUT GOD IS THE STRENGTH OF MY HEART, AND MY PORTION FOR EVER."—(Psalm lxxiii. 24, 25, 26.)

A STRONG argument, in favour of a future state of reward and punishment, has been derived in every age, from observing the present unequal condition of men. The force of this argument has been perceived and admitted, even by heathen writers, who were destitute of the light of divine revelation. The writers to whom I allude have argued that, as God is a righteous governor, and, as such, will make a difference between virtue and vice; and since that difference does not appear to be made in this life, because virtue is often oppressed and vice triumphant; there must, therefore, be a future state, in which that difference shall be manifested, by rewarding virtue and by punishing vice.

The obvious truth of this argument, which must be approved by the common sense of mankind, is found to pervade every part of the Bible; and therefore, throughout the whole of the Bible, we are taught that we should not judge of the real state of men before God, by reason of their state before men. We learn from the Bible that worldly prosperity is no proof of God's favour, and that poverty and affliction are no proof of His displeasure. The Bible teaches us that there is now a real, though not always an apparent, difference, between the righteous and the wicked; and further, the Bible teaches us that the difference between the two will be clearly manifested, at the resurrection of the dead. The righteous are those, whom God hath chosen and separated unto Himself, and whom He hath made partakers of His regenerating grace. The righteous are those, who are born again of God's Spirit, and are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works; and God is pleased to try and chasten them with various afflictions and temptations, in order that they may know what is in their own heart, that they may be loosened from the world, that they may become partakers of God's holiness, and that they may be ripened for the enjoyment of the inheritance of the saints in light.

While the argument in favour of a future state of reward and punishment, arising from the present unequal condition of men, is thus strong; yet, it must be admitted, such is man's weakness, such is the tendency to an evil heart of unbelief, that even the righteous are found to entertain thoughts that are dishonourable to God, that seem to impeach the equity of His righteous government, and that inevitably depress the mind. Such unbelieving thoughts cut off from the souls

of God's children those precious consolations of divine grace, that are inseparably connected with a sure trust and confidence in the care and love of our heavenly Father. If we allow ourselves to suppose that prosperity and adversity are indications of God's favour and displeasure, we shall most certainly weaken our trust in God.

The 73rd Psalm, of which our text forms a part, affords a striking illustration of the truth of these remarks. The writer of this Psalm, one of God's dear children, acquaints us with the painful exercise of his own mind, when he compared the prosperity of the wicked with his own deep distress. And this painful exercise of his mind, and the relief which he obtained, he has faithfully recorded, under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for the instruction, and edification, and comfort of God's believing people in every age.

The writer of this Psalm places at its commencement a cheering and precious truth. A truth, which after his trial and temptation was fully established in his mind, and which encouraged him to draw near to God, when under divine teaching he was enabled to have a clearer view of God's dealings, in this lower world.

"*Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.*"

This is the great truth, which the man of God leaves on record. The natural Israel was God's chosen people, and, as such, was a type of that people, whom God has chosen in His Son, Jesus Christ; and those who had a clean heart, were those who had been renewed by regenerating grace, and in whom God had created a new heart. These remarks may show to us with sufficient

clearness, who those persons are to whom God is good. God is, indeed, good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works; but, in a peculiar and especial manner, God is good to His people, to those whom He hath chosen in Christ, and called out of darkness into His marvellous light.

Having laid down the great truth that God is good to Israel, the writer of this Psalm proceeds to show what had been the painful exercises of his own mind; and by what means he became possessed of this precious truth, so as to believe it, and rejoice in the knowledge of it, and be able to affirm in the language of our text, "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

In considering the subject of this Psalm for our own edification, I shall notice,—

First, the temptation with which the prophet was assailed. This temptation arose from observing the different estates of the righteous and the wicked, in this life. In all ages of the world the wicked have had, apparently, in most cases, the decided advantage over the righteous. And this advantage they have obtained, because, being unrestrained by the fear of God, they have not hesitated to employ any means, in order to promote their temporal advantage; and, also, because God does not, in general, keep back prosperity from the wicked, as He does from the righteous. Under all circumstances, prosperity has a tendency to harden the heart, to alienate the mind from God, and to deaden spiritual affections. Hence it is, that as a general rule,

God is pleased to withhold prosperity from the righteous; because as a loving Father, He will keep His children dependent upon Himself. Prosperity is desired by all men, but as God knows that prosperity is not always conducive to the highest interest of His children, He, therefore, withholds prosperity from them; and sends them trials, and afflictions, and temptations. This the prophet observed and felt, without knowing the gracious purpose, which God had in view. "As for me," he says, in the second verse, "my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble like other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens"—blaspheming God,—"and their tongue walketh through the earth," reviling and slandering the righteous.

Such, the prophet observed, was the state of the wicked; while on the other hand, he says, "His people"—the righteous—"return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them." "They return hither." That is, they are tossed about with griefs and fears, and a full cup of tears is wrung from their weeping eyes, as we read in another Psalm,—"O Lord of hosts, how long wilt Thou be angry against the prayers of Thy people? Thou feedest them with the bread of tears, and givest them tears to drink in great measure."

This was the view which the prophet had of the different estates of the righteous and the wicked, in this life; and hence, he unbelievingly exclaims in ver. 12, "Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning."

A new and bright scene was now about to open before the mind of the afflicted servant of the Lord. "When I thought to know this," he says, "it was too painful for me;" (a thing which his reason could not reconcile with any just idea of the equity of God's dealings;) "until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end." And this leads me to consider,—

Secondly, the victory which God gave the prophet over his temptation. The temptation arose from taking a partial, instead of a comprehensive, view of God's dealings; and from judging of those dealings according to the light of natural reason, rather than according to the light of the Holy Scriptures, which reveal the mind of God. In the prophet's difficulties (and here I may remark that, in our difficulties we should follow his example,) he went to God for instruction, and then he understood the fearful end of the wicked—"Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when Thou awakest, Thou shalt despise their image." The most exalted state to which a wicked man may be raised, prepares for him a greater and more dreadful fall into hell. And as men become prosperous

in their worldly affairs, so their places become more slippery; for there are more temptations to evil, and more abundant means for gratifying the sinful propensities of our fallen nature. It is well to observe that the persons, who are called wicked, in our text, as well as in many other parts of the Holy Scriptures, are not spoken of as murderers, adulterers, extortioners, drunkards, or liars; but they are described as unconverted men, men who were still in their natural state, sensualists, men who live without God, and after the course of this evil world. And this fact throws much light upon a text of fearful import—"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God." Oh, how sudden and how awful is the end of the wicked! How are they brought into desolation as in a moment! "I have seen the wicked in great power," says the prophet David, "and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." And Job says, "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, and are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away. God layeth up his iniquity for his children: He rewardeth him, and he shall know it. His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty."

Such shall be the end of the wicked, as that end was plainly revealed to the prophet; and the knowledge of this their end reconciled the man of God to the vast difference, which he could not fail to observe between the condition of the righteous, and that of the wicked, in this life. What words can describe the folly of those, who lay up treasures for themselves, and are not rich towards God: whose hearts are given to the things of time, and whose thoughts are never employed upon the things of eternity? How much better to be in the condition of Lazarus! "Lazarus died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments."

It was this view of the difference between the righteous and the wicked, in the sight of God, that afforded the prophet a victory over his temptation.

Let us now, in the last place, notice the fervent and triumphant language with which the man of God expresses his hope and confidence, "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My heart and my flesh faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

We here observe that, however great the prosperity of the wicked, and however much the prophet himself was plagued and chastened; yet he comforts himself with this assurance, that God is his guide, and will be his portion for ever; and the same assurance is calculated at all times, and under all circumstances, to impart real comfort to all the children of God. The righteous have been separated from the wicked by the distin-

guishing grace of God, in order that they should not perish with the wicked, but may be saved through Christ for ever. The righteous have been effectually called by God's Spirit working in due season, in order that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. The righteous have received life from God, and are sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption; and God gives to them the forgiveness of all their sins. He strengthens them with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and daily increases in them the manifold gifts of grace, the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and fills them with the spirit of His holy fear. God is continually with them; He holds them by their right hand, and when He chastens them it is for their profit, that they may be partakers of His holiness. He is always guiding them by His counsel, and always enriching them with His grace, which is in Christ Jesus. The knowledge of these blessed things may well comfort the righteous. A father's love, a Saviour's grace, and peace assured to, and sealed upon, the conscience, by the Holy Ghost, may surely satisfy and support the widow in her desolation, the prisoner in his dungeon, and the martyr at the stake. Whatever may be the outward trials, or the inward fears of the righteous, God will guide them by His counsel, and afterwards receive them to glory. The period of suffering is short; the time of trial and sorrow will soon end; ere long, God will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and they shall enter into the joy of the Lord. It is the enjoyment of this present blessedness, and the expectation of future and eternal glory, which draw forth from God's children this cheering language,—"Whom have I in heaven

but Thee?" And under the most trying afflictions, and in the last great conflict with death, each of them may exclaim, "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" is the question asked by the apostle; "shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

My dear brethren, your attention has been directed to the subject of this most interesting and instructive Psalm; and now I would ask, to which of the two classes do you belong,—the righteous, or the wicked? Bear in remembrance the great difference which there is now, and will be for ever, between the two classes in God's sight, whatever may be the judgment that men may form of them in this life. The Psalmist says, in the words which follow our text, "Lo, they that are far from Thee shall perish." The wicked are far from God, and therefore the wicked shall perish. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Will not this be a fearful end? Is it not painful to contemplate such an end with reference to others? but how tremendous, how appalling the thought, if there were even the mere possibility that such may be our end!—"They that are far from Thee shall perish." Can we

fail to be moved and agitated when we hear of the loss of a ship with a valuable cargo, and many souls on board? Do we not feel much distress when, a bank fails, and affluence and comfort give place to poverty, and anguish, and despair? Do not our tears flow, when we hear of a battle, though victory has declared itself on our side? Our tears flow because of the immense sacrifice of human life, and because of the sufferings of the wounded, of the bereaved, of widows, and of fatherless children; but what are such losses, and what are such sufferings, compared with the loss of the soul, and the misery of hell? "They that are far from Thee shall perish."

See, dear brethren, how our attention is aroused by the word "lo." This word means behold, mark well, consider. Behold, destruction, misery, and eternal death, are impending; for the wages of sin is death. "Lo, they that are far from Thee shall perish."

The Lord's people, like the Psalmist, have their times of affliction, and sorrow, and temptation; and like him each of them may say, as he says in the last verse, "It is good for me to draw near to God." They all find it good to draw near to God. It is in so doing that they receive instruction and are divinely taught. Then they cease to be envious at the foolish, though they may see the prosperity of the wicked. Then they can say in the words of this Psalm, "Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places; Thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream, when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when Thou awakest, Thou shalt despise their image."

When thus taught, believers can say under any trial,

"It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good." May all who have been thus taught ever remember that, "God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart." Let them guard against using such unbelieving language, as that brought before us in this Psalm; for when the prophet was better taught, he declared, "If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of Thy children. And to speak thus would indeed be an offence against all the children of God; for though they may have been plagued all the day long, and chastened every morning, yet they all have uniformly experienced, and all have unanimously declared "God is good to Israel." They know that God is good, when He reveals to them His mercy and His grace, forgiving them all their sins, through Christ Jesus. They know that God is good, when He sheds His love abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto them. They know that God is good, when He fills them with joy and peace in believing, and gives to them a foretaste of the blessedness and happiness of the heavenly and eternal state. And they know that God is good, because that God has given to them exceeding great and precious promises, so that they might be partakers of a divine nature, and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. Let it then, my dear friends, be your great aim, and the constant study of your life, to show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.

VI.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

"THEREFORE BEING JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: BY WHOM ALSO WE HAVE ACCESS BY FAITH INTO THIS GRACE WHEREIN WE STAND, AND REJOICE IN HOPE OF THE GLORY OF GOD. AND NOT ONLY SO, BUT WE GLORY IN TRIBULATIONS ALSO: KNOWING THAT TRIBULATION WORKETH PATIENCE; AND PATIENCE, EXPERIENCE; AND EXPERIENCE, HOPE: AND HOPE MAKETH NOT ASHAMED; BECAUSE THE LOVE OF GOD IS SHED ABROAD IN OUR HEARTS BY THE HOLY GHOST WHICH IS GIVEN UNTO US." —(Romans v. 1—5.)

THERE is a very wide difference between those persons, who are attempting by their own works, to make their peace with God; and those persons, who, believing in the Lord Jesus, are justified by faith, and have peace with God. The former never obtain that which they seek, unless it please God to open their eyes and reveal to them His own free mercy and abundant grace in the Lord Jesus. They never can quiet their conscience, they never can satisfy the demands of God's holy law, they never can feel assured that they are reconciled to God, and consequently, they can have no

real and certain hope of salvation. Hence all those uncomfortable feelings, which such persons must have; hence the gloom, and uncertainty, and distressing anguish of spirit, which frequently render life a burden, so oppressive, that, though what are called the pleasures of the world are freely enough enjoyed; death is so earnestly desired, that individuals will sometimes, by their own act, put an end to a life so wretched. Many persons, it is true, pass on through life, apparently unconscious of sin, and unconcerned about an eternal world. But these instances, when they do occur, furnish additional proof of the truth of the word of God, because the word of God plainly declares that, both sin and Satan deceive men, blind their minds, and lead them to ruin. Conscience, however, in most men, if not in all men, will at one time or another produce some uneasiness on account of sin. Sickness, and danger, and difficulties, and a near view of death do frequently arouse the conscience, as out of sleep; and then unnumbered sins, which may have been long since forgotten, will come crowding into the mind.

It is under such convictions of sin, that persons speak of making peace with God; because then they painfully feel the truth, so solemnly declared in the Scriptures,—"There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Then it is that they will promise to amend their ways and their doings; they will abstain from certain practices, which they consider to be evil, and they will engage in the performance of certain duties, which they suppose will be acceptable to God; and in this way they endeavour to make peace with God, and to satisfy their conscience. But the way of peace they know not. They find daily that they have no power to

help themselves; they do things which they ought not to do; and they leave undone the things, which they ought to have done; they labour under distress of mind; the remembrance of sin is grievous, the burden of sin is intolerable. They are far, very far from having peace with God; for they are the enemies of God by wicked works; and they are equally far from having peace in their own conscience, for conscience is clamorous, and unsatisfied, and unceasing in its condemnation. Hence there will be, as it were, a tempest within—reason, and the conscience, and the passions engaged in a dreadful conflict, and the soul—the immortal soul, trembling with anxious fear, under an awful sense of divine displeasure.

How much opposed to this wretched and miserable state is the state which is presented to us in the words of our text!—"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The apostle, in these words states the true and only way by which peace with God can be obtained; and he also states the inestimable blessings which believers in the Lord Jesus Christ enjoy, and shall enjoy for ever. The gospel brings glad tidings of God's free mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel assures us that God our heavenly Father has reconciled the world unto Himself, by the death of His Son. The gospel assures us that the Lord Jesus made peace by the blood of His Cross;—that He redeemed mankind by the one offering of Himself a sacrifice for sin; and the gospel assures us that all who believe in Jesus shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.

These declarations are, indeed, glad tidings, which, when they are believed, do bring sinners to Christ,

they bring them into a blessed state of reconciliation and peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; and these declarations discover so much love, and mercy, and grace on the part of God our heavenly Father, that they do powerfully influence all who believe.

Nothing can be further from truth, and fact, and experience than to speak of the belief of the gospel as being unattended with any saving and practical influence. The apostle in our text speaks of the influence, which attends the belief of the gospel, and he speaks of the effects, which faith in Christ will produce. Nothing, indeed, but the belief of the gospel—nothing but faith in Christ can give relief to a distressed conscience, and afford real support under the trials and afflictions of life; or give a sure and solid hope before God in the view of death, and eternity, and judgment to come. All persons to whom the Lord Jesus Christ has been made known, and to whom He has been revealed by the Holy Ghost, as the Saviour of sinners, and the only hope of glory, know and believe that they have redemption through His blood, and that in Him they have righteousness, and strength, and salvation. They know that, being justified by faith, they have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is much easier to conceive than to describe the blessing, which is expressed by these words, "We have peace with God." Conceive what it is for a child to be reassured of a parent's kindness, or for a servant to see the frown of displeasure removed from a master's brow, or for a subject to be reinstated in the favour of a prince against whom he had rebelled; and then you may form some idea, however inadequate it may be, of the

blessed state of those persons who, being justified by faith, have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Believers are no longer the enemies—they are the friends, of God. They are no longer in a condition of servile fear, with the spirit of bondage; but they enjoy the liberty with which Christ hath made them free; and God sends the Spirit of His Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Believers are no longer strangers and foreigners, outcasts and wanderers, aliens and slaves; but they are fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God; they are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.

The apostle further observes, "By whom also [*i. e.*, by the Lord Jesus Christ] we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." And this is a full statement, in a few words, of the gospel of the grace of God.

Justification is ascribed to grace, and the way of access to God is through the Lord Jesus Christ; and all who have access into this grace will rejoice in hope of the glory of God. This is the way, and the only way of salvation. We all, by nature, are unrighteous before God; but God gave His only begotten Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification. And all who believe on the only begotten Son of God, are justified, or accounted righteous, their sins are forgiven through God's rich and abundant mercy; they are reconciled unto God; they have peace with God; they have peace in their consciences—that peace of God which passeth all understanding, and which can never be known except by those who, being justified by faith, have peace with God.

The apostle uses an expression which well deserves to be observed: he says, "This grace wherein we stand." There is no such thing as standing before God, but only in that grace which justifies the ungodly, by the imputation of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus to all who believe. It is written in the 130th Psalm, "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? but there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared." It is also written, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." If God were, indeed, to mark iniquities, and if God were to enter into judgment, no child of Adam could stand before Him—no man could be justified in His sight. In order to stand before God with acceptance, and in order to be justified in His sight, it is above all things necessary that we should have access to the grace which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Hence it is, my dear friends, that the ministers of Christ continually call upon you to come to the Lord Jesus, and to believe in the Lord Jesus; because without Him there is no salvation, there is no grace, there is no mercy, there is no peace, there is no life, there is no hope of the glory of God. And those, who do not know the Lord Jesus, can have no conception of the magnitude of those blessings of which they are destitute. Is it not a blessing to be justified—to be accounted righteous? Is it not a blessing to have peace with God? Is it not a blessing to have access to His rich and sovereign grace, and to stand in that grace pardoned, and accepted, and saved for ever? Is it not a blessing to rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and to know that when we

are absent from the body, then we shall be present with the Lord?

In the following verses the apostle shows the powerful influence of this great scriptural doctrine of justification by faith—an influence peculiar to itself, and which no other doctrine, no other system can command. Justification by faith not only gives peace with God, access into His grace, and power to rejoice in hope of the glory of God; "but," says the apostle, "we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." This is the true and proper influence of the doctrine of justification by faith. Here we may see what real religion is—the true religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. By this standard we are enabled to distinguish between the power of religion and mere form—between the possession of real religion and mere talk upon the subject. We are enabled to distinguish the work of God the Holy Ghost, from the most artful and ingenious imitation of it by man. The one bears no closer resemblance to the other, than a statue of the finest piece of sculpture does to a living man.

The eleventh Article of the Church of England says, "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification."

It would be well to read that Article, and to compare it with the chapter from whence our text is taken. The

Articles were written by men who had deeply studied the word of God,—men who were full of faith and of the Holy Ghost,—men who, like Bishop Latimer and Bishop Ridley, laid down their lives in the defence of the glorious gospel of God our Saviour. The Articles are designed as a protest, which all may understand, against the fearful apostasy, and soul-destroying errors, of the Church of Rome. Those godly men, whose names I have just mentioned were burnt at the Martyr's Stake, in the city of Oxford, on the 16th day of October, 1555, now three hundred years ago. Those godly men have not only declared that we are justified by faith only, but they have left on record their deliberate judgment respecting that great and fundamental doctrine of the word of God.

The martyred reformers of our Protestant Church say of justification by faith, that it is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort; and in the Homily on the Passion of our Saviour they express themselves more fully on this subject, in the following words:—"By this, then, you may perceive that the only mean and instrument of salvation required on our parts is faith; that is to say, a sure trust and confidence in the mercy of God; whereby we persuade ourselves that God both hath and will forgive our sins; that He hath accepted us again into His favour; that He hath released us from the bonds of damnation, and received us into the number of His elect people, not for our merits or deserts, but only and solely for the merits of Christ's death and passion; who became man for our sakes, and humbled Himself to sustain the reproach of the cross, that we thereby might be saved and made inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. Let us steadfastly behold Christ

crucified. Let us only trust to be saved by His death and passion, and to have our sins washed away through His most precious blood, that in the end of the world, when He shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead, He may receive us into His everlasting kingdom, and place us in the number of His elect and chosen people; there to be partakers of that immortal and everlasting life which He hath purchased unto us."

As long as we do not feel any distress on account of our sins and our sinful state, so long we may not manifest any concern about that salvation which is by grace, and through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and while this is the case, we live without God, and, continuing in that state, we shall certainly die without hope; but when, by the grace of God, we are brought to see, and feel, and know what our real state is in the sight of God, as sinful, miserable, and guilty creatures, justly deserving God's wrath and indignation, then, by the light and teaching of the Holy Spirit, we discover a great remedy and a perfect cure in the cross and passion of our Saviour Christ, both God and man. The Son of God suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. He shed His blood to wash and to cleanse us from sin; He was chastised that we might have peace with God; He humbled Himself and became obedient unto the death of the cross, that He might make us the children of God, and exalt us to everlasting life. He was made a curse for us, that we might receive a blessing from the hand of God. He wore a crown of thorns, in order that we may inherit a crown of glory.

My dear friends, I would now address those who are indeed believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is, as

you know, beloved in the Lord, by the grace of God that you have been brought to know the Lord Jesus. You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Your conscience has been awakened, and your mind has been enlightened by the Holy Spirit. You were once far off from God, but now you are made nigh by the blood of Christ. You have had your sinful state plainly discovered to you by God's word and by God's Spirit. The word of God has been conveyed to your mind in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, and your faith does not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. You have felt the burden of sin, and you know what that distress of mind is, that a consciousness of sin will invariably produce. You have been led and drawn to Christ; God has given you faith to believe in His only begotten Son, who came into the world to save sinners, and to put away our sins by the sacrifice of Himself. In consequence of having been thus enlightened in your mind, and thus drawn to Christ, you have found peace and joy in believing—peace with God, and joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. You can bear a willing, and grateful, and decided testimony to the powerful and blessed influence of faith, in the Lord Jesus. You know that the ungodly are justified by faith, and you know that the faith, which justifies the ungodly, does also purify the heart, overcome the world, and work by love. But all these blessed things are hidden from the world. These are the invisible things of that kingdom of God, which is within you, and which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Let it then, my dear friends, be your constant and chief aim to show your faith by your

works. Let it evidently appear that the doctrine of justification by faith is a wholesome doctrine,—that it leads you to love God and His people, to love His word and His service, to love Christ and His salvation. Remember that those who are justified by faith rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and that their hope is a hope that maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in their heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto them; and also because they will certainly receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. If any of you be now suffering in mind, body, or estate, remember what the Lord Jesus Christ suffered in the days of His flesh, and remember that all His sufferings were for your sake, in order that you through His poverty, humiliation, and death might be rich for eternity. Remember that He was tempted in all points as you are, yet without sin; that as perfect man, and a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, He can sympathize with you in all your trials, afflictions, and sorrows; and remember His gracious words, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

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[illegible] of the Psalm to our blessed Lord and [illegible] from [illegible] is evident in [illegible] of the many [illegible] in the New Testament in which this Psalm is [illegible], and [illegible] the general reference is to that of [illegible] is equally evident [illegible].

In the second chapter of the Acts we find the apostle Peter addressing the assembled multitude in these words: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

The first verse of this Psalm declares the absolute and universal sovereignty which Christ received from His Father when He was seated on His right hand, and received all power in heaven and in earth; and the following verses contain most precious and consoling promises, which the Father made to His Son, and which declare the triumph of the gospel in its progress through the world. I say in its progress through the world, because neither the Scriptures, nor the past history of the Church will permit us to expect, that the whole world will receive the faith of Christ, before the coming again of our blessed Lord. This Psalm speaks very plainly, both of the people and also of the enemies of Christ; and declares that the one shall be made willing to submit to Him, being conquered by His grace; while the other shall be subdued, by His power, and shall be made His footstool.

The gospel shall indeed be preached, as our Lord said, for a witness unto all nations; but there is reason to fear that it is a witness, which the majority in all nations will reject; and when it is thus rejected by any one nation, and God has accomplished His purpose in sending the gospel to that nation, then the gospel will be taken from that nation, and sent to another nation. And thus the light of the gospel, as it advances and enlightens some nations, leaves other nations in a state of darkness. Where, it may be asked, is the light, which once shone upon the Holy Land? And where is the light, which illuminated the seven churches of Asia Minor, and the churches of Antioch, of Corinth, and Philippi? That light has long since passed away, and Mahometan darkness, and papal superstition now prevail. And where, it may further be asked, is the light which

once shone so brightly at Rome itself? For the apostle said that, the faith of Rome was spoken of throughout the whole world. That light is also gone, and idolatry, and superstition, and priestly tyranny, and antichristian error, and sins as vile as those of Sodom, now prevail.

As the arts and sciences, and literature, have followed the course of the sun from east to west, even so has the light of the gospel. It arose in Judea, and went on to Greece and Rome; and then to the British Isles; and from these islands it has gone to the western world, and the islands in the South Sea. And whether it will forsake our country, as it has forsaken so many other countries, and leave us only the mere profession,—the mere lifeless form of Christianity, having a name to live while truly and indeed dead before God, is known only to God, who says, "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things;" but certain it is that the man who loves his country has much reason to fear, when he sees the low state of morals, the profanation of the Sabbath, the neglect of public worship, the opposition to real religion, the growth of infidelity, and the encouragement, which has been afforded to Popery. Be this, however, as it may, one thing is certain, that there is a great light in the world; that it has been spreading and extending itself since the day of Pentecost, eighteen hundred years ago, and that it will continue to give light to them that sit in darkness, until the purpose of God is accomplished.

The words of our text contain a plain prediction of the propagation, and triumph of the gospel. Let us dwell for a short time upon this blessed subject, and may God the Father glorify His Son by sending down

upon us, in an abundant measure the gift of the Holy Ghost; that we may know and feel that the gospel is indeed the rod of Christ's power, and that by it He rules in the hearts of His enemies.

When our blessed Lord suffered Himself to be betrayed into the hands of His enemies,—to be crucified and slain for our sins, how improbable did it appear, that His despised doctrine should become a rod of strength; and what a triumph did wicked men and evil spirits seem for a time to have gained over Him! In the view of carnal wisdom the Saviour himself, and His doctrine seemed to have expired together; but carnal wisdom knew not that the death of Christ had been predetermined by the wisdom of God; that it was the death of Christ, which would make the doctrine of the cross the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; and that by His death, the rod of Christ's strength should at length become a sceptre, and rule the world. How completely did God confound and set at nought both the power and wisdom of man; when He sent the rod of Christ's strength out of Zion, and said, "Rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies"! Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together against the holy child Jesus; but it was, as the disciples said, to do "whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." They had been the betrayers and murderers of Jesus of Nazareth, and when they had finished their work, they thought that they had also put an end to His; but they little knew that He whom they had crucified was the Son of God, and the Lord of life and glory; and that His doctrine which they rejected would soon spring up a rod of such strength, that by it Christ

should rule in the midst of His enemies. God had appointed that the place of our Lord's humiliation, and sufferings, and death should be the place in which His name should be first proclaimed with triumph; in which the truth of His doctrine should be first established, and in which the riches of His mercy through His atoning blood should be first manifested, in pardoning those for whom He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

It was in that city in which he was condemned, and where His blood and the blood of His prophets had been shed, that the standard of the cross was first to be raised, forgiveness of sins in His name first to be preached, and that Church first to be founded, which was to endure through all ages, which was to be the Church of all nations, and which was to contain all the elect people of God. In connection with this subject the language of the beginning of the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles deserves attention. At the fourth verse we are told that our Lord, in His last interview with His apostles, before His ascension into heaven, commanded them that they should not depart from the city of Jerusalem; but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard from Me. And again at the eighth verse, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Well might the apostle Paul say, in his defence before king Agrippa, "These things were not done in a corner;" for, as I have observed, in the city where Christ suffered, there was this doctrine first preached, and in that city was His Church founded.

In Acts i. 3 St. Luke says that Christ showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of the apostles forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; and then ten days after His ascension, being fifty days after His resurrection on the day of Pentecost, the annual festival, on which the giving of the law was celebrated—fifty days after the exodus from Egypt, on that same day, when it was fully come, the disciples were all with one accord in one place, and as the hour was nine o'clock in the morning, and it was the Lord's day, it is probable that they were assembled for the purpose of worshipping that Lord and Saviour, who had bought them with His blood, and that they were now looking for the fulfilment of the promise. That promise was fulfilled. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. And now it was that the promise of our text was also fulfilled. The Lord did now send the rod of Christ's strength out of Zion, and now He began to rule in the midst of His enemies. The rod of Christ's strength is His gospel, the good news of salvation through faith in His blood. This is the rod, the mace, the sceptre, the ensign of power, with which He subdues, converts, and rules in the midst of His enemies; and we have a most splendid and triumphant specimen of its power on the first day that the Lord sent it out of Zion. When the apostle Peter addressed those men, who were assembled at the feast, out of every nation under heaven; and when He bore testimony through the power of the Holy Ghost, dwelling in Him to the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, as the appointed sacrifice for sin, and as the Saviour of the world; these men were pricked in their

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Here we behold what a rod of strength the gospel of Jesus Christ is. When this gospel is manifested to the consciences in the full [illegible] of the Holy Ghost it is indeed a rod of strength, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. It subdued the hearts of the murderers of Jesus, and formed them into such a community as the statesman and the philosopher have never been able to imitate: for we are told that the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul. Neither said any of them that ht of the things, which he possessed was his own; they had all things common. And those believers

in whom Christ ruled by His word and by His Spirit, were dwelling in the midst of His enemies, opposed by the Roman governor, opposed by the Jewish king, opposed by the chief priests, the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, opposed by all men and by all wicked spirits; but that gospel which they believed did fully manifest itself to be the rod of Christ's strength, with which He should rule in the midst of His enemies.

My dear friends, it is only by the light and power of the Holy Spirit that we can know and understand the things of God. Let me therefore impress upon your minds the necessity of praying in private as well as in public for this inestimable gift. It is the possession of this gift of the Holy Ghost, that constitutes a Christian, and though the light of the Spirit at first may be faint, yet, like the light of the early dawn, it will steadily increase, and spread, and illuminate the mind, so that at length the believer will have a right judgment in all things, and will know and believe the love with which God has loved him. The light, and teaching, and comfort of the Holy Spirit are more to be desired and are more highly to be prized, than all earthly things. The man who has not the Spirit of God, is in all things connected with his soul and with the eternal world, like a man at sea in a storm without a chart, without a compass, without a pilot; while the man who has received the Holy Spirit is, as it were, in the haven of truth, and peace, and eternal repose. The mind of the one man is full of darkness, because it is full of unbelief; the mind of the other is increasingly full of the light of God's Holy Spirit. The apostle Jude thus discriminates between the man who is a Christian indeed, and the man who is not. "Beloved," the apostle writes at the 17th

verse, "remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they, who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Here we find that the believer is distinguished from the sensual man by this mark, namely, praying in the Holy Ghost; and this is the most blessed mark of pardon and of salvation. The believer receiving the Holy Ghost, lives in the Spirit, walks in the Spirit, prays in the Spirit, and is sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption. And when the Holy Spirit dwells in the believer, the influence of the Spirit is like that of the rain, which descends from heaven and waters the earth, and causes the seed to grow and bear fruit. The Lord graciously says, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up among the grass, as willows by the watercourses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord, and shall surname himself by the name of Israel."

May it please God so to bless His precious gospel, that we all may know and feel that the gospel is indeed the rod of Christ's strength. May Christ rule in our hearts by the sweet and gracious influence of His word and of His Spirit. May all evil in us be subdued, and every thought be brought into captivity to the obedience

of Christ. May it be manifest that we are indeed the members of Christ's mystical body, that we have meat to eat of which the world knows neither the nature, nor the value; that we drink of a running stream of living water, which refreshes and rejoices our souls; and that while many, who know not the way of peace, are ready to say, "Who will show us any good?" the desire of our hearts is best expressed in these words,—"Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us."

VIII.

THE LORD'S PEOPLE MADE WILLING IN THE DAY OF HIS POWER.

"THY PEOPLE SHALL BE WILLING IN THE DAY OF THY POWER, IN THE BEAUTIES OF HOLINESS FROM THE WOMB OF THE MORNING: THOU HAST THE DEW OF THY YOUTH."—Psa. cx. 3.

THE first verse of this Psalm declares the supreme Godhead of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and declares that He received all power both in heaven and in earth, when, on the day of His ascension into heaven, His Father said to Him, "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." The second verse declares the propagation and triumphs of the gospel:—"The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion: rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies." And the third, the verse which now comes before us, declares that Christ's people shall yield willing obedience to Him, in the day of His power; and that however few in number the Lord's people may now seem to be while scattered in the world, and however humble their outward appearance, like their Master, of whom it is written, "When we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him," yet the time is approaching, when they shall be gathered together unto their Lord, at

His coming, and then they shall appear as numerous and as splendid as the drops of dew, which are seen to glitter, like so many brilliants, when the sun is risen upon the earth.

This, then, was a most gracious promise to comfort Messiah, our blessed Lord and Saviour. He was despised, and He was rejected of men. His doctrine was hated: because it called men from sin, and the world unto God. He was persecuted by His enemies, and, such is the weakness of the flesh, that He was deserted by His friends. He was crucified and slain, and the number of His disciples, when they assembled after His ascension into heaven, amounted to only one hundred and twenty; yet long before He appeared in the world, God declared by His prophets, that the mission of Christ should be attended with the most signal and complete success. The prophet Isaiah says, "When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." It is God's pleasure that Messiah should prosper—that all men should be blessed in Him, and that all nations should call Him blessed; but man's pleasure has ever been to hate, and despise, and reject Messiah; to disbelieve His gospel; to love darkness rather than light; to give himself wholly up to the pursuit of the things of time and sense, and, as far as possible, to put God himself out of the world which He has made, which He governs and sustains by unceasing care, and which every year He fills with plenteousness, and clothes with beauty. It is, I say, man's pleasure to live a mere carnal life, to forget God, and to banish all recollections of death, and hell, and judgment to come; and in every way to oppose the

truth of God, and the gospel of His Son; because that truth and that gospel do plainly declare the ruin and misery of man, that he is now in captivity to sin and Satan, and justly deserves the wages of his sin, which is eternal death. God's pleasure is that man should be saved, and that he should be happy, and for this end God has given His Son to save the world. This gift of the Son of God is the great manifestation of the love of God to man. This gift shows the awfully ruined state of man, since only the Son of God could save man; it shows the boundless extent of the love of God, since He did not spare His only begotten Son; and it shows the value of the soul, since such a great price was given for its ransom. Here, then, we observe great opposition between man's pleasure and God's pleasure, and hence, since man seeks his pleasure in sin, he is opposed to God and the gospel of His Son, and to the gospel message of salvation. He is opposed to its truth, because he is opposed to its holiness, and because that gospel says, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" and hence, as our blessed Lord says, this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. All opposition to the gospel arises, solely from this cause, and is therefore, so long as it is indulged, the sure mark and seal of perdition. No man can be saved but by the gospel, for he that believeth not the gospel shall be damned, and, therefore, all opposition to it, or neglect of it, is evidence of a most fearful state.

In consequence of man's love of sin his will is not free, it is in bondage, and though reason, and conscience, and the word of God admonish him, yet he is not able to obey their admonitions; he is not able to forsake sin;

he is not able to turn to God. He is a slave to sin, but it is slavery according to his own pleasure; he loves it, and therefore his will is in bondage to sin, and, as this is the state of every man born into the world, it is evident that no man can believe the gospel, no man can turn to God, no man can forsake his sins, until God breaks that yoke of bondage and sets the sinner free. This is the gracious promise made in our text,—"Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power."

1. From this passage of Scripture I shall, in the first place, show that Christ has a people, and in the second, I shall show that, that people shall be willing to believe in Christ, and to obey Christ, in the day of His power.

That Christ has a people is everywhere declared in the Holy Scriptures, and in every age, since the rod of His strength was sent out of Zion, there have been some, who have openly professed, and confessed His name, who have adorned His gospel by their walk and conversation, who have shone as lights in the world, who have patiently endured reproach and persecution, and some of them in times of persecution have willingly laid down their lives, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. A question here naturally arises, What has made this difference amongst men, seeing that all are by nature in bondage to sin, living in darkness, and hating the light? The Scriptures afford a clear and sufficient answer. The Scriptures tell us that the love and grace of God have made the difference. It is of man's own pleasure that he loves sin and darkness, and hates the light; and it is of God's own pleasure that any man is delivered from that fearful state, released from his miserable captivity to sin and Satan, brought out of darkness into light,

adopted into the family of God, assured of everlasting salvation, and sealed with the gift of the Holy Ghost, as a pledge of an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. This is the great, and blessed, and glorious truth, which is everywhere declared in the Scriptures, when the people of Christ are spoken of as an elect, a chosen, a predestinated people—a people whom the Father, according to His own good pleasure, and the exceeding riches of His grace and mercy and love, has given to His Son. All the leading facts of the Scriptures, and all the dispensations of God, tend to the manifestation of this great truth; while this truth itself is stated in plain language throughout the whole of the Scriptures; and we shall find it to be altogether for our advantage and edification to take the facts as they are presented to us —to examine the dispensation of God only by the light of Scripture, and to receive the statements of the Scriptures on this and every other subject, with that simplicity of mind and teachable disposition, which are discoverable in a child, and without which our Lord expressly says none shall enter the kingdom of God. The want of this mind and disposition leads many to reject the gospel; they reason instead of believe; they cavil instead of pray; and therefore it is said, "The preaching of the cross," "salvation solely by the grace of God, through the atoning blood of Jesus," is to them that perish foolishness, "but unto us, who are saved it is the power of God." Far be it from me to say that there is any opposition between reason and Scripture. There is a difference, but no opposition; and the difference may be compared to that which exists between the light of a candle and the light of the sun. But while the will of man is in bondage to sin, his mind is full of

darkness, and hence all his proud reasoning, and all his false reasoning, and all his unjust, ruinous conclusions. It is of such reasoners, and the light in which they walk, and in which they persuade themselves that they are safe, that God speaks by the prophet Isaiah in these words,—"Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of Mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow." My dear brethren, let us all guard against this reasoning —reasoning against the things of God; for it will surely lead to endless sorrow and everlasting death.

That Christ has a people, that that people has been chosen in Him, and given to Him by the Father, is plainly stated in the Holy Scriptures. For example, in John vi. 37, Christ says, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out;" and, then, more expressly in the forty-third verse, when some murmured at His plain and faithful declaration of the truth, "Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." Again, in John x. 26, Christ says to the Jews, "Ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one." And again, in John xvii., in His prayer to His Father on behalf of His people to the end of the world, He says thus,—"Thou hast given Him

power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy word. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me. Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." All these passages express the language of our text, that Christ has a people—a people given to Him by the Father, chosen out of the world, and separated from the world, and distinct from the world. All the apostles use the same language as our Lord; but it is unnecessary to quote from their writings. Our Lord's testimony is sufficient. It is wholly because of this electing grace and love, which the Father has manifested in choosing a people out of the world, and giving them to His Son, that the Church of Christ exists in the present day in the world. Wicked men thought to have destroyed it at the very commencement, when they murdered its Founder, and afterwards His apostles, and scattered, by the hand of persecution, all who professed the faith of Christ. So that the apostle Peter addressed his first epistle to those who were scattered in various countries by persecutions, but collected in Christ by the electing grace of God. "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father."

2. The second part of our subject, on which I proposed to speak is this, that Christ's people shall be willing to submit to Him, and to obey Him, in the day of His power.

By the day of Christ's power is meant the whole period of time from His ascension, when He received all power both in heaven and in earth, until His coming again. And ever since that time His people—all whom the Father has given to Him, in each succeeding age, and in every place, have been willing to take up His cross and follow Him. Until the time came, when it was God's purpose that they should know the grace of God in truth, and be called, outwardly by the joyful sound of the gospel, and inwardly by the still small voice of the Holy Ghost, they were not to be distinguished from other men; for until then they were like other men, dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as others. "But," says the apostle, "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Him, (by grace ye are saved,) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." The manner in which it pleases God to influence the will of man, so as to make him willing to believe in Christ, and to obey Him, is far beyond our knowledge. God's work upon mind, like His work upon matter in the beautiful creation around us, of which we form a part, is hidden from us. We see it only in its effects.

But we do as certainly see it in the one case as in the other. When we see a man, who had been unconcerned about his soul and eternity, who was living without God in the world, who paid no attention to that Book which professes to contain a revelation from God, who amidst the dangers and calamities of this world, and in a state of uncertainty with reference to the next, was trying to find amusement in the various ways of folly and vanity; when we see such a man brought to confess the value of his soul, the importance of eternity, the necessity of serving God with a devoted heart and a holy life; when we see him turning to the Bible, just as a man, who had been long in darkness and in danger in the midst of a desert would turn to the light of the rising sun; when we see him worshipping as his God, Jesus, whom formerly he despised and rejected; when we see him depending only upon His precious bloodshedding for the forgiveness of all his sins; when we see him active in doing good, patient under provocation, filled with joy and peace in believing, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God,—then we do as clearly discern the work of God, as when we look abroad upon the face of the heavens and the earth. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," says our Lord, "and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." My dear friends, this day is the day of Christ's power, and it is power supreme both in heaven and in earth. I would therefore beseech you all to be willing to come to Him, to believe in Him, to trust in Him, so that He may save you to the uttermost with an everlasting salvation. There is nothing to prevent your coming but simply your unwillingness to come; for our Lord says,

"Ye will not come to Me, that ye may have life." And the cause of this unwillingness is to be found in the love of what is evil; "Men love darkness rather than light," and Jesus Christ says that this is the condemnation, under which men lie. On all matters connected with the soul, and God, and eternity, the gospel sheds abundant light, but, because of evil deeds to which the will is in bondage, the light is hated—it is shunned, and wicked men would, if possible, extinguish it. And darkness is loved—that fearful darkness of the unrenewed, the unenlightened mind, and which, if not removed in this world, will surely end in the blackness of darkness for ever.

Would to God, my brethren, that I could impress those things upon the minds of those who are living without God; that I could address you with that earnestness, and plainness, and faithfulness which the Holy Ghost would employ and bless in order to reach your hearts, so that you might indeed be willing in the day of Christ's power—willing to forsake sin, willing to repent, willing to believe, and willing to walk in newness of life! Then you would soon know and enjoy the blessedness of believing in Christ. The things of this life cannot make you happy; but Jesus Christ can save you, and bless you, and bring you to everlasting glory.

My brethren, the Book of God testifies that the wages of sin is death, and that the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God. Oh, then, beware how you trifle with eternal things, and beware of being deceived by that most common of all deceptions,—to put these things off to a convenient season.

The power of conscience is too strong to allow men to say that these things are not true, but the chief deception, which the devil employs, is to suggest that it is time enough to think of these things.

To-day, then, dear friends, this day, if you should hear the voice of God harden not your hearts, but hear and receive those gracious words, let them draw you unto God,—"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

IX.

THE APOSTLE PAUL'S PRAYER FOR BELIEVERS AT EPHESUS.

"FOR THIS CAUSE I BOW MY KNEES UNTO THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, OF WHOM THE WHOLE FAMILY IN HEAVEN AND EARTH IS NAMED, THAT HE WOULD GRANT YOU, ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY, TO BE STRENGTHENED WITH MIGHT BY HIS SPIRIT IN THE INNER MAN; THAT CHRIST MAY DWELL IN YOUR HEARTS BY FAITH; THAT YE, BEING ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN LOVE, MAY BE ABLE TO COMPREHEND WITH ALL SAINTS WHAT IS THE BREADTH, AND LENGTH, AND DEPTH, AND HEIGHT; AND TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST WHICH PASSETH KNOWLEDGE, THAT YE MIGHT BE FILLED WITH ALL THE FULNESS OF GOD."—Ephes. iii. 14—19.

THIS is a prayer on behalf of real Christians. It is a prayer on behalf of those persons who have been separated from the rest of mankind by the distinguishing and electing grace of God. It is a prayer on behalf of those persons who compose God's family here upon earth, whom God has redeemed by the precious blood of His dear Son, and to whom God has given life by His Spirit. It is a prayer on behalf of those persons who are God's dear children, the very members incorporated in the mystical body of His Son, Christ Jesus

our Lord, and who are heirs by grace and through faith of God's everlasting kingdom.

That such is the character of this prayer is evident, not only from the language of the prayer itself, but also from the whole of the epistle. The apostle begins the epistle by blessing God for the spiritual blessings, which He had bestowed upon those, whom, according to His own good pleasure, He hath chosen in His Son. In chap. i., ver. 3, the apostle writes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." And then the apostle adds, in chap. ii., ver. 1, "You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in

heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

The apostle thus describes the past state of those for whom he made prayer to God. They had been dead in trespasses and sins, and were, in consequence, children of wrath. But out of that awful and miserable state they had been delivered by the rich mercy of God, because God had chosen them in His Son, before the foundation of the world. The apostle says that, they had obtained redemption through the blood of God's dear Son, the forgiveness of sins. And in another part of this epistle the apostle says, "Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ: and therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."

All men are by nature in the same condition. All men are dead in trespasses and sins, and all are children of wrath. The rich mercy and abundant grace of God accomplish the same blessed end, wherever they are bestowed. They quicken the dead souls of men; they bring men out of darkness into marvellous light, and, through the knowledge of a crucified Saviour, they give to all who believe, the blessed hope of everlasting life. Hence the apostle's prayer is as applicable in the present day to those, who have been quickened by the Holy Spirit, as it was to the saints at Ephesus, when the apostle bowed his knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The saints in the present day, (for all true believers

are saints, that is, they are persons whom God has separated from the world to Himself)—the saints in the present day require to be strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man; they require that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, and that, being rooted and grounded in love, they may be able to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that they may be filled with all the fulness of God.

The apostle's prayer contains three petitions, and while we are considering each of them, may the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ bless His own word, according to His good pleasure, and to the praise of the glory of His grace.

The first petition is for the strength which the Holy Spirit imparts to the inner man. The expression, inner man, signifies the renewed mind, or the renewed man,—the mind renewed by grace. While in our natural state, we bestow very little attention upon our souls. It is the outward man, the corrupt body of flesh and blood, which claims and receives our attention. The mind, indeed, may not be neglected; but it is viewed merely with reference to its capacity and powers, as intellect distinguished from matter, and which requires to be cultivated by education, and enriched and adorned by human knowledge. The mind is not viewed, as it ought to be, as a carnal mind, a mind alienated from God, a mind filled with spiritual darkness, a mind in which Satan dwells and rules, a mind which is the habitation of evil thoughts, a mind which, in consequence of the fall of man, is essentially evil, and the stronghold of unbelief. The cares and anxieties of unenlightened men are chiefly bestowed upon the craving wants of the

body, upon the acquisition of gain, and upon the pursuit of the honour, which cometh from man. With believers, it is otherwise. They, through grace, become sensible of the value of their souls; they become acquainted with their own wretchedness, and guilt, and misery. They soon learn, that they have no power of themselves to help themselves; and that they continually need the grace of God to enable them to withstand the temptations of the world, the devil, and the flesh. The temptations which surround the children of God are so numerous, and so powerful; their own fleshly nature is so corrupt, and the opposition, which they have to encounter, both from the evil spirit and from ungodly men, is so severe; that if it were not that strength is imparted to the inner man, by the Holy Spirit, they would be unable to maintain the conflict, and must lay down their spiritual weapons, in despair.

Let real Christians, then, confide in the grace and power of the Captain of their salvation; let them press onward, lifting high the standard of the cross of Christ; let them take unto them the whole armour of God, and let them pray that they may be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man.

The second petition in the apostle's prayer is for the presence of Christ,—"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."

While in our natural state we know nothing savingly of Christ, nor do we wish to know Him. And no sermons are so much disliked, as those which are full of Christ, and which dwell unceasingly, as they ought to do, upon the grace, and glory, and salvation, and unsearchable riches of Christ. But God's dear children desire, like the apostle Paul, to count all things to be

loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord; because Christ is their life, and their peace, and their hope; Christ is their wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. They know and believe that Christ has bought them with His blood; that He has reconciled them unto God; that they are complete in Him, and that they shall never come into condemnation. Hence they desire that Christ may dwell in their hearts, that their affections may be fixed upon Him, and that they may love, and serve, and glorify Him. When Christ dwells in the heart by faith, the happiness of the heavenly state is already begun upon earth. Then we have access to God, as to a Father and a Friend. Then we have communion with God. Then we are filled with joy and peace in believing. Then there is a sweet and blessed sense of sonship, and of adoption into the family of God. Then God sends the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Through faith in Christ, and having Christ dwelling in the heart, we overcome the world and the wicked one. We bear reproach for Christ's sake, and esteem that reproach as greater riches, than all that world can bestow. Hence the labours, hence the sacrifices, hence the patient endurance of evil for Christ's sake, for the advancement of His glory, and for the salvation of souls. "I endure all things for the elect's sakes," says Paul, "that they may also obtain the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." We should endeavour, as much as we possibly can, to realize the presence, and to enjoy the grace of Christ. In His favour, indeed, is life, and His lovingkindness is better than life. It is His smile that gladdens the heart. It is His grace that is sufficient in times of

weakness, and sorrow, and temptation. His arm supports us, His eye directs us, and His blood cleanseth us from all sin. Christ has loved His Church and given Himself for it, and His people are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Let real Christians always remember these blessed things. Let them pray always, and not faint. Praying, says the apostle, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, in order that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith.

The third petition in the apostle's prayer, is that believers may have a comprehensive knowledge of the love of Christ.

While in our natural and unregenerate state, we know not the love of Christ. The apostle speaks of that knowledge as the peculiar, the especial privilege of the Lord's people. It is the knowledge of the love of Christ that, through the power of the Holy Ghost, effects that change, without which no man can enter the kingdom of God. The love of Christ is immediately discovered, when our minds are enlightened by the Holy Spirit; because then, there is made known to us the great love of Christ, which He manifested in dying for sinners—the just for the unjust—that He might bring us to God. The knowledge of this love admits of continual growth. There is in this love such a breadth, such a length, such a depth, and such a height; it is altogether so great, so vast, so boundless, that we shall probably never be able fully to comprehend it, either in time or in eternity. But how desirable to know as much of the love of Christ, as we possibly can! How great the blessing to have this love shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto us! The apostle says of the love of Christ that it passeth know-

ledge, that is, it is of more value than all human knowledge. Human knowledge has respect to earthly things, and is limited by time, but the knowledge of the love of Christ has respect to heavenly and eternal things. It had its beginning in time, and shall endure throughout eternity. The knowledge of the love of Christ accomplishes and secures the greatest blessings for those to whom it is made known. It confers and perpetuates real happiness. This knowledge has sustained the true servants of Christ under the greatest trials, in every age of the Christian Church. It has constrained the Lord's servants to undertake any labour, and to make any sacrifice, in order to promote the glory of their Saviour, and to manifest their love to Him who loved them and gave Himself for them. In what glowing language the apostle speaks on this subject in 2 Cor. v. 14:—"The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again from the dead." We see the importance of this knowledge from the strong language employed by the apostle; he says, "That ye being rooted and grounded in love,"—being rooted like a tree, which sends its roots deep into the earth; and being grounded, like a house which has its foundation laid low, or, that rests upon a rock. Thus it is, through infinite grace and mercy, with those who know the love of Christ; their foundation is deep in the purpose of God, and in the redemption of Christ. Neither the law, nor conscience, nor Satan can overthrow their hope; that hope is grounded and settled in the free and eternal love of God. "I am persuaded," says the apostle,

"that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Let real Christians, then, remember that they are always to pray, and not to faint. "Praying always," says the apostle, "with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," so that they may be able to know the love of Christ.

Having thus briefly considered the petitions contained in the apostle's prayer, I would in the next place direct your attention to the end for which he prayed, and which is set before us in these words,—"That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." When man at first sinned against God, he was banished from the divine presence; he was given over to a reprobate mind, and became the servant of sin and of Satan; and the Bible plainly testifies that, every human being is by nature in this condition. The Bible does also testify that God has shown amazing pity, and grace, and love, towards sinful men. That God sent His Son into the world to save sinners, and that He might destroy the works of the devil. The effect accomplished by the sending of the Son of God into the world, and by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, is this, that sin has been put away, death has been overcome, and the kingdom of heaven has been opened to all believers. Those persons, then, who believe in the Lord Jesus, being reconciled to God by the death of His Son, are restored to the divine favour, and enjoy the presence of God. "Ye are the temple of the living God," says the apostle, addressing believers; "as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and

they shall be My people, and thus be filled with all the fulness of God." Observe, my dear friends, the precious words of the apostle John: "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. Hereby we know that we dwell in Him, and He is in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit; and we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

We now perceive the end for which the apostle made prayer to God. It was for this end, that believers might dwell in God, and God in them. That believers might be raised, not only from the ruin of man's apostate state; but also that they might be exalted to the very summit of glory and perfection; for as there is none higher than God, it follows that those who are united to God, and in whom God dwells, are raised above all things. This union with God is not apparent to sense. While in our natural state we are wholly unacquainted with it. The apostle says that our life is hid with Christ in God. Believers are acquainted with this union, and they have evidence of it, because God dwells in them, and this indwelling of God is a pledge

of the eternal weight of glory which shall be the consummation and bliss of body and soul throughout a vast eternity. The apostle says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." Again, it is said by St. John, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

May God the Holy Spirit impress these precious and all-important truths upon our minds. May we remember that we ought always to pray, and not to faint; and may this be our prayer, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God.

X.

THE FULNESS OF CHRIST.

"It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell."—Col. i. 19.

In the prayer which our blessed Lord addressed to His Father, on behalf of His people, He says, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent;" and this is the knowledge, which is most needful for man. Other knowledge is useful with reference to man's condition in this life; but that knowledge, of which the Saviour speaks, is essential to man's happiness, both here and hereafter. Man, being the creature of God, cannot be happy without the knowledge of God; and man, being a sinner, cannot be happy without the knowledge of the Saviour. The Saviour is made known to us in the Holy Scriptures; and it is by the teaching of the Holy Spirit that the Lord's people are savingly and effectually brought to know the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom all fulness dwells. While in our natural and unregenerated state we are blinded, both by sin and Satan, and therefore we do not see the grace and glory of the Saviour.

But when God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines in our hearts, then we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We then know the Lord Jesus as our Saviour, we then cleave to Him by a true and living faith; we then know, as the apostle says, that in the matter of our salvation "Christ is all." The eyes of our understanding, being enlightened, are then turned towards the Lord Jesus. We give our hearts to Him, we set our affection upon Him, we are constrained by His love, and our desire is to live to His glory, and to show forth His praise. How, it may be asked, can it be otherwise, since it is of the Lord Jesus the apostle says, "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell"? Great, indeed, is the blessedness of having revealed to the soul that knowledge, in which consists eternal life. The persons to whom this knowledge is made known are called in the Holy Scriptures God's chosen, and faithful, and elect people.

With the view of leading your minds, my dear friends, into a fuller knowledge of the Saviour, in whom all fulness dwells, I would speak of that fulness under these four heads:—1. A fulness of power; 2. A fulness of wisdom; 3. A fulness of grace; 4. A fulness of comfort; and I pray that our gracious Father may give us His Holy Spirit, that we may know what is the hope of the Lord's calling, and what is the exceeding riches of the glory of the inheritance in the saints.

I shall speak in the first place of the fulness of power which dwells in the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle says of Christ in the 15th and following verses of the chapter, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature; for by Him were all

things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created *by Him* and *for Him;* and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist; and He is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence: for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." This passage of Scripture declares, for the comfort of all the Lord's people, that the power which belongs to the Saviour is the almighty power of God. It is that power with which He created the heavens and the earth, before He assumed our nature. It is the power, with which He fed multitudes of men with a few loaves of bread, the power with which He cast out devils, the power by which He walked upon the sea, rebuked the winds, healed the sick, and raised the dead; and all this power dwells at this time in the Lord Jesus. The Saviour said, after His resurrection, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." This view of the Saviour's power is most precious to those who know Him. Until we are brought to feel our own weakness, it is not likely that we shall regard, as we ought to do, the power of the Lord Jesus Christ; but when we are practically taught to know by painful experience, that we are both weak and helpless—when the weight of sin presses heavily upon our conscience—when we are exposed to dangers, from which we cannot escape, and to temptations, which we cannot overcome; when we find ourselves involved in difficulties, oppressed with cares, overtaken with unexpected trouble, and painful and afflicting circumstances, from which no earthly power

can deliver us; when, perhaps, we are at the side of a death-bed, and one whom we love is about to be removed from us, then it is certain that we shall feel our need of help; and if by grace we know the Lord Jesus, we shall find that in Him all fulness dwells,—His strength will be perfected in our weakness.

If, then, I address any persons, who are in circumstances similar to those, to which I have referred, let me direct you, my dear brethren, to the Lord Jesus. Go to Him in faith, and say in the words of the Psalmist, "Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man." And you will then soon find, that it is not a vain thing to wait upon and trust in the Lord. "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord." And no doubt if those, who do know the Lord would wait upon Him, and serve Him, and place their whole trust and confidence in Him, they would ever find that He is indeed a present help in trouble. Whatever may be those circumstances, in which you may be placed, however painfully distressing they may be, and however impossible may seem to you, the means by which you may obtain relief; yet remember that in your Saviour, Jesus the Son of God, all fulness dwells; and further remember that His compassions fail not—He is a merciful and faithful High Priest over the house of God; He is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and every believer at the close of life will be enabled to say, as Jacob said, "He is the God who fed me all my life long until this day, the angel, which redeemed me from all evil."

In the second place, there is a fulness of wisdom in the Lord Jesus. It is only when a man is brought to know the Lord Jesus, that he becomes truly wise; for it

[illegible] the Lord Jesus [illegible] salvation. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

truth of the gospel, and to the power and grace of Christ. When this is the case, sick chambers are mournful places to visit, and death-beds do not realize the Christian's hope and triumph,—"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" What a privileged place is the chamber of the dying Christian! —the chamber of one who, through the riches of the grace of God, and by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, has been led to Christ, and made wise unto salvation. In general, when the life has been in accordance with the faith professed, we find the real Christian, at the end of his pilgrimage, whether it has been long or short, resting in peace, and rejoicing in hope; knowing in whom he has believed, and having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better, than remaining in the flesh, struggling with sin, and exposed to the fiery darts of the wicked one.

In the third place, I observe that, there is a fulness of grace in the Lord Jesus. Those highly favoured ones, who have been brought to know and believe in the Saviour, do well know that their Saviour Christ is full of grace and truth. The word grace means kindness; and wonderful indeed, and precious, and most abundant, is the kindness of God our Saviour. What kindness in coming down from heaven to save us! What kindness in suffering the just for the unjust, to bring us to God! What kindness in accomplishing our redemption, by shedding His own most precious blood! It is the grace of the Lord Jesus that first arrests our attention, subdues the power of sin, enlightens the mind, expands the heart, quickens and calls forth heavenly affections, and brings peace to the conscience, when the Holy Ghost reveals Christ in the heart, as the Friend and Saviour of

sinners, as the Lord our righteousness, and as the hope of glory. This grace of the Lord Jesus is precious to all the children of God; because it meets their case, as sinners, and because it is that grace which brings salvation. While the sons of men are unacquainted with their state as sinners, who are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, they do not attach much value to the grace of the Lord Jesus; but it is well for sinners that there is such grace, and happy indeed is that man who knows the grace of God in truth.

If any persons whom I now address are distressed, by a consciousness of their miserable, and sinful, and guilty state,—to whom life is a burthen, and death is a terror, and whose minds are filled with awful apprehensions of judgment to come,—hear, my dear friends, the words of our text, "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." God has sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world,—in that Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, all fulness dwells. He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and He is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him; and His words are, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Believe His words, have faith in His blood, rely on His grace, and He *will* save you with an everlasting salvation.

The last head to be considered is this, namely, the fulness of comfort that there is in Christ Jesus. The view of what the Saviour is in Himself, as being the head of His Church, both perfect God and perfect man, and the view of what the Saviour is to His people, as being their High Priest, the propitiation for their sins, the Lord their righteousness, and the Advocate with the

Father, are views which cannot fail to impart, under the light and teaching of the Holy Spirit, most abundant comfort and the richest consolation. The great goodness of our heavenly Father is clearly manifested, since it pleased Him that in Christ should all fulness dwell—fulness of comfort. That there is comfort, and abundant comfort in Christ, can be known only by those persons, who have gone to Him under a deep sense of their own sinful and guilty state. Many persons do, no doubt, feel their need of comfort, but they do not know nor believe that the comfort which they so greatly need is to be found *only in Christ.*

Worldly pleasures and amusements present strong temptations, and are sources of great attraction, with the expectation of finding comfort, while the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint; but "miserable comforters are ye all," are words which may well be addressed to all such comforters and physicians of no value. It is Christ, and *only Christ,* that can give real comfort. He gives medicine to heal our sickness, and He gives rest unto the soul. Many have gone to Christ for comfort, they have gone in faith; but their faith has been like a grain of mustard seed. They have been in doubt, as to whether Christ would receive them, would hear their prayers, and pardon their sins. And behold! He has surprised them with His mercy, discovered to them His love, pardoned their sins, gladdened their hearts, filled them with joy and peace in believing. They have lived on earth to the glory of God their Saviour; and they have departed this life in the full assurance of faith. They have entered into the joy of the Lord, and they are now in the presence of God.

Worldly pleasures and amusements are wretched sub-

stitutes for the blessings of the gospel, and for communion with God. Not that the believer is insensible to the value of those earthly pleasures, which may be legitimately enjoyed, and, therefore, according to his station in society, his means, his education, and his taste, he will seek and enjoy, at proper times, and in proper measure, those pleasures, which flow from a pure source, and which may refresh both body and mind; but strength and wisdom, grace and comfort, he will seek and find in Christ. The believer knows from the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, from the history of the Church, the evidence of facts, and the experience of his own heart, that spiritual strength and wisdom, grace and comfort, are to be found ONLY IN CHRIST, in whom all fulness dwells. Hence it is that the believer would ever cleave close to his Saviour, and would count all things to be loss for the knowledge of Christ.

My dear brethren, you who know the grace of God in truth should keep these things always in remembrance. Forget not that it is by God's electing love you are in Christ Jesus, and that while many are blind to the grace, and glory, and salvation of your Saviour, you have been brought to know Him, and now you are no longer darkness, but light in the Lord. You know that you have salvation by grace, and through faith in Christ. You know that all the promises of God are faithful and true, in Christ Jesus; and therefore remember that when you want strength and wisdom, grace and comfort, you will find these, and every other blessing, without limit, without money, and without price, in your Saviour the Lord Jesus. By His death the Lord has put away your sins; He has reconciled you unto God, and He will save you, and present you faultless before the presence of His

glory with exceeding joy. May His love constrain you to render unto Him willing obedience. See what you can do for Christ to advance His glory, to extend His kingdom, to show forth His praise, to convert sinners, and to gather the elect people of God out of this fallen and sinful world. We should all work while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work. We shall all soon be called upon to give an account of our stewardship, whether the talents have been few or many which have been committed to our trust. Whether our position has been in the higher, or in the humbler walks of life, whether we be of the clergy or of the laity, whether male or female, whether old or young—all must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. May all now seek the Saviour, since it has pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.

X.

A PRAYER OF MOSES, THE MAN OF GOD.

"O SATISFY US EARLY WITH THY MERCY; THAT WE MAY REJOICE AND BE GLAD ALL OUR DAYS." Psalm xc. 14.

THIS ninetieth Psalm is one of the two Psalms, which have been selected for the Funeral Service; and it is well suited to this occasion. The language of the Psalm is impressive, instructive, and mournfully sublime. It is calculated to suggest profitable thoughts at any season, but more particularly at those, when death has made a recent wound, when some dear friend has been removed to the eternal world. This Psalm leads our minds to contemplate that great and adorable Being, who is not subject to any change, but who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Those persons, who are in their natural state, and who know not God, do suffer extreme distress on such occasions, and mourn as those who have no hope,—no scriptural hope; but the Lord's people, those to whom the Lord has made Himself known, have one gracious and almighty Friend, who fills heaven and earth, and to whom all things, past and future, are

equally present. To Him they can address themselves when earthly friends are removed. They know that He has been the Protector, Defender, and Friend of His people in every age, and, therefore, they can say, in the language of this Psalm, "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God."

The text contains a petition well suited to those occasions of sorrow, to which I have referred. Whatever worldly people may think, and however they may act, when death comes amongst them, certain it is that the Lord's people will have this truth deeply impressed upon their mind, that "man at his best estate is altogether vanity;" that earthly things are transient; that earthly expectations are vain, and that we spend our years as a tale that is told. When the people of God see man carried to his long home, and the mourners about the street, they are forcibly reminded that here we have no abiding city, and that nothing of an earthly nature can satisfy the soul of man, and insure to it real happiness. All the things of this life are then seen in their true character. They do not possess much value in themselves; but only as they are connected with heavenly, and eternal things. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. Neither wealth nor rank can accompany us into the eternal world. These are the distinctions, and supposed advantages of this life, which are most valued and most sought after. And yet, however great may be the wealth, which is acquired; and however high the rank, which may be attained, the soul remains un-

[illegible] of earthly [illegible] merely [illegible] when we [illegible] this life is [illegible] the inspiration [illegible] the language of the text. [illegible] we may rejoice [illegible] In the language of Scripture [illegible] the earnest desire of [illegible] is the mercy of God [illegible] the happy state [illegible]

I. The desire of the soul to be satisfied. This desire [illegible] the soul of every man, and though it may not be expressed in words as in the text, yet it is [illegible] by the practice of men. However diversified [illegible] pursuits may be, two things are clearly shown; one is that men are not satisfied, and the other is that they desire to be satisfied. It is certain that the man of business is not satisfied: since he toils so laboriously, rising early, and late taking rest, and eating the bread of carefulness. It is certain that the man of pleasure is not satisfied, since the desire for pleasure remains, when the ability to enjoy pleasure is gone. It is plain that the man of a daring and ambitious mind is not satisfied, since his desires enlarge as his honours gather thick upon him. The soul of man was made for God,—to know God, and to enjoy God; and in order that man might be capable of this enjoyment, his soul possesses a vast capacity, which the universe cannot fill; nothing can fill it, but God himself. As long, then, as a man remains without the knowledge of God, so long he must be unsatisfied. And hence all the dissatisfaction,

and unhappiness, and misery, with which the world is filled; hence that restlessness of spirit, which is so apparent, and of which all men must be conscious; hence the prevailing desire for something new,—new scenes, new occupations, new company. Hence the readiness to find fault with persons, and things, and places, because they do not afford satisfaction; while the true cause of all disquietude is within. The soul of man can find happiness only in God, and in communion with Him, the great Father of spirits. But communion with God there can be none, while man is in his natural state; and, therefore, man, as a sinner, and while a stranger to the grace of God, can find no happiness, neither in God nor in the creature.

This, then, is the actual condition of every man, while he is in his natural state,—while he is an unconverted man. Man has a strong desire to satisfy his soul; he feels thirst, and he endeavours to quench it. He tries every expedient, but his thirst remains. He spends his money, as the prophet says, for that which is not bread; and his labour for that which satisfieth not. He passes into the eternal world, and his thirst remains. No man, I say, while in an unconverted state, can find happiness, either in God, or in the creature. In order to find happiness, it is necessary to receive forgiveness of sin from that God, against whom we all have sinned. But this truth no man knows, nor will indeed believe, until God in mercy enlightens his mind. Man has certain desires, and he sees that the world is full of objects, which are suited to gratify those desires. He tries to find happiness in them, but he is disappointed. He tries again, but with no better success. And in this way all men, while unconverted, spend their lives. They are deceived

[illegible] and they are [illegible] by real disap-[illegible]

[illegible] that all men do not [illegible] in the miserable state. God opens the [illegible] which He has chosen unto salvation, and then they [illegible] the true cause of their wretchedness, and they are [illegible] with the divine and [illegible] which God himself has so graciously provided. They then perceive that in order to be happy it is necessary that God should show them His mercy and grant them His salvation. And when God is pleased to do this, the knowledge of His mercy brings real satisfaction and rest to the soul.

2. The second part of our subject is this, namely, that it is the mercy of God that satisfies the soul. This Psalm is entitled "A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God." It is not generally supposed that this Psalm was written by Moses, but it is most certain that it was written by a man of God. Men of the world look to the things of the world for satisfaction; but every man of God—all God's chosen people, know by experience that *nothing but the mercy of God can satisfy the soul.* They know that it is through the tender mercy of God that the Dayspring from on high hath visited them, giving to them light, while they were sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death. They well know that a sense of the mercy of God will afford satisfaction in any situation, and under any circumstance. They know that the mercy of God is the chief good for fallen and sinful man; and that all persons, who are unacquainted with the mercy of God, are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. This is strikingly expressed in Psa. iv. 6, "There be many

who say, 'Who will show us any good?'" The good thing, the chief good for man,—that by which he may become happy. To which question the Psalmist replies, "Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us." From this answer we learn that the light of God's countenance, that is, His favour, His mercy, His salvation, is the chief good. Again, in Micah vi. several questions are asked, with reference to the worship of God and the pardon of sin; and here again the answer is, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is *good*,"—the good thing,—the chief good,—the light of His countenance,—His mercy,—His salvation. "He hath showed thee what is good," or, His goodness, through His rich mercy, in His Son. And this was shown under the Old Testament dispensation by the promise of a Saviour, by the types and sacrifices of the law; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of *thee*"—to whom He has shown his mercy, and whom He has made His child by adoption and grace,—"but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with *thy* God?"

Again, in Exod. xxxiii. 18 it is written that, Moses said to God, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory." And God said, "I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy." Here again we find that the good thing, or the goodness of the Lord, is His grace and His mercy, which He shows according to His own sovereign pleasure. It is the

[illegible] but [illegible] known [illegible] language, [illegible] we may [illegible]

The word [illegible] abundance. The same word occurs in Psa. xvi. 11, where it is said, "In Thy presence is fulness of joy." How unspeakably great and honored is the privilege of the Lord's people! In this life they receive abundance of mercy, and in the life to come they shall have a fulness of joy. Surely with such a possession in time, and with such an expectation of the eternity, believers of the gospel of the grace of God have reason to rejoice and be glad all their days. Hence the language of the apostle, "Rejoice evermore," "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice." This leads me to consider, in the last place,—

3. The happy state of those who are the objects of God's mercy. They rejoice and they are glad all their days. A consciousness of being the objects of God's mercy in Christ (which consciousness is connected with the perception of that mercy,) must assuredly occasion joy and gladness. It is not possible to conceive of any state, which is more directly opposed to this, than that in which immortal creatures are the objects of God's wrath. And yet such is the state of all unconverted men. The Bible expressly says, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." It also says, "He that believeth not the Son of God shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." And truly these are fearful declarations. Man is a creature "whose breath is in

his nostrils," and Almighty God is the great Creator, and no creature can hide himself from God. No creature can deliver himself out of the hand of God. In the eleventh verse of this Psalm we read, "Who knoweth the power of Thine anger? even according to Thy fear, so is thy wrath." No creature knows the power, that is, the extent of the power of God's anger. Whatever our fear may suggest, as to the extent of God's wrath, it cannot by any means equal the reality. Surely, then, my dear friends, those who are delivered from the wrath to come, through the rich grace of God, and are satisfied with the abundance of His mercy, must rejoice and be glad. They know, for God tells them in His word, that "they shall be saved with an everlasting salvation, and shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end." "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed," says our gracious God and Father, "but My kindness shall not depart from thee, nor the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Joy, and gladness, and peace, and hope, are inseparably connected with the mercy of God. This is shown by the apostle in the Epistle to the Romans, chap. xv. He is writing of God showing mercy to the Gentiles, and he says, "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost."

The people of the world represent the religion of the Bible as joyless and gloomy, because godly people will not unite with them in their noise, and folly, and dissipation; but the joy and gladness of God's people do not consist of dissipation, and vain amusements, and forgetfulness of God. Their joy and gladness are connected with the mercy of God, and are suited to the

nature of an immortal soul: and, therefore, their pleasures are rational and spiritual and sublime; and in order to have them abundantly and unceasingly, it is only necessary that the Lord should answer the prayer contained in the text, "O satisfy us early with Thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." "Remember me, O Lord," says the Psalmist, "with the favour which Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation; that I may see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation, that I may glory with Thine inheritance."

No person can believe these statements of the word of God without perceiving that, the Lord's people are a happy people in this life, and shall be inconceivably, and unchangeably happy in the life to come; while, on the contrary, the people of the world, notwithstanding all their efforts to make themselves happy, are unhappy in this life, and have no solid and well-founded hope that they shall be happy in the eternal world. "Be not deceived," says the apostle, in his Epistle to the Galatians, "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

The word early, in the text, deserves to be noticed. The word early literally means, in the morning. O satisfy us in the morning of life with Thy mercy, that none of our days may be cheerless and joyless; but that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

My dear brethren, with some of you it is now the morning of life, with some it is noonday, while upon others, the shadows of the evening are about to fall. But tell me,

are you satisfied with the mercy of God? It is sad to spend any portion of the morning, without having received mercy from God. It is still worse to pass the meridian of life without it; but it is a fearful thing to see the night set in, without having had one cheering ray of the light of God's countenance, through the course of a long life.

Your attention has now been directed to most important truths. It is a truth that the soul of every man seeks to be satisfied. It is true that the mercy of God, and that nothing but the mercy of God, can afford perfect and lasting satisfaction to the soul; and it is also true that all, who do receive mercy from God are happy, and shall be happy for ever. God knows what it is that can make us happy, and He knows that as sinners we never can be happy, until we have obtained the pardon of sin. Sinners may be thoughtless, sinners may be insensible, they may be immersed in business, they may be ensnared by pleasure; but they are far from happiness, and they are equally far from safety. You may forget God, and you may endeavour to forget your sins; but God will not forget your sins. We read in this Psalm, "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance." It is as vain to think that you can hide your sins from God, as to think that you can hide yourselves. God will set all your secret sins, those sins which have had existence only in the bare conception of your mind, in the light of His countenance. And this will be like bringing them forth from the dark bowels of the earth, into the full light of the noonday sun. And this, truly, is a most fearful view. How we should rejoice to hear that there is a way of escape, that there is a refuge from

the wrath to come, that there is mercy, that there is forgiveness of sins, that there is a Saviour, Christ the Lord, whose blood cleanseth from all sin! All people should go to the Saviour, should believe in the Saviour, should gladly forsake all and follow Him, because the whole universe can afford to us nothing so valuable as the mercy of God, which comes through Christ Jesus our most blessed Lord and Saviour.

Seek, then, dear friends, this gracious Saviour, and He will surely be found of you. He will draw nigh to you, and then your soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and your mouth will praise Him with joyful lips; for the riches of His grace, the wonders of redeeming love, and the plenteousness of His great redemption; and then you will say, in the words of our text, "O satisfy us early with Thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days."

XII.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

"EVERY ONE OF US SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD."
(Romans xiv. 12.)

THERE is a striking agreement between the testimony of conscience, and the testimony of the word of God. Conscience, as well as reason, bears testimony that there is a God, and at times fills the mind with awful apprehensions of guilt and danger, while those apprehensions make it manifest that all is not right between men and God. These apprehensions plainly show that men feel they are accountable to God, and that men dread the time, when they must appear before God in judgment.

To this testimony of conscience is to be ascribed much of the false religion, which is in the world. Man, being by nature ignorant of the true God, and of true religion, and being convinced by the testimony of conscience and by the works of creation that there is a God; and that He ought to be served, have been impelled to make gods and to devise religion for themselves.

This testimony of conscience is universal, and perhaps there is no nation, which has not some object of

worship and some form of religion. There have, indeed, been individuals, who called themselves philosophers, and who affected to be wiser than other men, who said, that all religion was mere superstition, and that the testimony of conscience was not to be received; while these men were not able, with all their philosophy, to deliver themselves from superstition, nor entirely to suppress and to disregard the testimony of conscience. It is possible, indeed, while men are in health and in prosperity, to play the game of life with tolerable success, and, like the unjust judge, neither to fear God nor to regard man; but there is a pinching point in the life of every man, (unless he should be cut off by the sudden stroke of death,) when he will have thoughts and forebodings from which he cannot deliver himself. While men are in health, and can occupy their thoughts, with the multiplied objects, with which they are surrounded in this world, so as to have their minds fixed upon the fleeting shadows of time, and not upon the concerns of an immortal soul, they may be able in some measure to drown the voice of conscience; but when they are stopped in their course by sickness, or by some alarming providence, and the mind is forced to turn inward upon itself, then we know from facts and daily experience, that conscience will bear its testimony,—that it will then plant many a thorn in a dying pillow, which neither human power nor human skill, nor all the subtleties of a vain philosophy can extract. All these natural apprehensions of conscience are fully confirmed by the word of God. That word bears testimony to the existence, power, majesty, and glory of God. It bears testimony that all men are His creatures, that all men are sinners, and that as sinners all men are exposed to everlasting death. It bears

testimony that all men are accountable creatures, that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and that every one of us shall give account of himself to God. And thus there is, I say, a striking agreement between the testimony of conscience, and the testimony of the word of God. They mutually confirm and establish each other's testimony. Conscience confirms the truth of God's word, and God's word confirms the testimony of conscience. While either would be sufficient to establish the truth, because they proceed equally and immediately from God, yet that truth must be fixed upon an immoveable basis, which rests upon the united testimony of conscience and the word of God.

I shall suppose that every person who hears me admits the truth of these statements that there is a God, that we are His creatures, and that we are accountable to Him. I shall therefore proceed to consider the doctrine contained in the text, that every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

We all are the creatures of God; it is He, who hath made us, and not we ourselves. He is our maker and absolute proprietor. He is spoken of in Gen. xiv. in these words,—"The Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth." He is the "Lord," that is, Jehovah, which means self-existent. He is the only Being who has life in Himself; the only Being who does not derive life from any other source. Every living creature has received its life from Jehovah. He is the most high God, the Supreme. As no creature exists, but by Him, so no creature can have anything, but from Him; and hence He is the possessor of heaven and earth. "God," says the apostle, "who made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven

[illegible] mples made with hands; [illegible] men's hands, as though He [illegible] to all life, and [illegible] made of one blood all [illegible] the face of the earth; [illegible] were appointed, and [illegible] in Him we live, and [illegible] passages of Scripture [illegible] the sovereignty of [illegible] are His, they are [illegible] and He placed us in [illegible] not to lead a sen- [illegible] not to spend our [illegible] any worldly pur- [illegible] own glory. He made [illegible] and capable of serving [illegible]

[illegible] man a rational soul, and made [illegible] made him erect in form, that he [illegible] those heavens which declare the [illegible] firmament which shows His handiwork. He gave him the faculty of speech, that when devotion was kindled on the altar of the human heart, it might ascend in the incense of praise to the throne of the eternal God. To us in particular, a portion of the human family, He has given His holy word, containing a full and perfect revelation of His blessed will. He has sent to us the glad tidings of great joy, that there is a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

He has given to us His sacraments and the ministry of His word. He has given to us His holy Sabbaths; He has given to us the means of grace. For all these things, and every other benefit conferred upon us by

Almighty God, we must render an exact account. I would, therefore, ask you, my dear friends, what account can you give to God? By divine mercy, we all have been spared another year. Many young in years and strong in health, have been cut down like grass, and their state for ever fixed. If they were walking with the world, and in the broad way, the word of God tells us that their end has been destruction; if they were walking with God, and in the narrow way to life, they shall receive glory, honour, and immortality.

If they rejected the gospel, the wrath of God will abide upon them for ever; if they believed in the Lord Jesus, He has saved them from their sins. The Bible says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

We who have been spared should review the past year, and inquire what account we can give to God. I would therefore ask you, my brethren, in reference to the great and sole end, for which you were sent into the world, what account can you give to God? The end for which God placed you here was to glorify Him, and to praise Him. Have you kept this end in view? Have you felt that you were engaged in the service of God,—have you known that His service is perfect freedom? Have you spent a portion of your time in communion with God, in the worship of God, not in mere form, but in spirit and in truth? Have you done this in private, entering into your closet, shutting your door, and praying to your Father, which is in secret? Have you done it in your families, with that decency, propriety, and order, with that regularity and reverence, which become the worship of God, and which have shown that your

house was the house of God, which have shown that you knew God and loved God, and delighted in the service of God; and that you had resolved, with Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Have you done this in the great congregation? Have you been constant in your attendance at the house of prayer? To use the language of one of the Psalms, Have you been glad when they said, "Let us go up to the house of the Lord"? Have you entered His gate with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise? Have you thus spent the past year, or have you, on the contrary, spent it without God in the world, living to yourselves and not to God, indulging in all worldly and carnal lusts? Private prayer, if attended to, a mere form; family prayer a mere form; and the public worship of Almighty God worse than a form—the eyes wandering through the church, and the heart, as Solomon says, like the heart of a fool, in the ends of the earth. If this be the case, I ask you, my brethren, what account can you give to God?

Again, God has given to us His holy word, containing a full and perfect revelation of His blessed will. He has given it to us, in order that we may become wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus, that it may be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Have you made it your study during the past year, knowing that that man is blessed, whose delight is in the law of the Lord, who meditates therein day and night? Have you prized it above everything in the world, because God has opened your eyes to perceive the grace and glory which it reveals, because God has given you faith in that Saviour of whom it testifies, because you are enabled to rejoice in that great salva-

tion which it proclaims? Have you had constant reference to God's holy word throughout the year, for direction and instruction in the government of yourselves, and your families; setting aside all worldly and carnal and infidel principles, the ungodly maxims and customs of this fallen world; guiding yourselves exclusively by the law of God, knowing that it is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes? Have you been careful that your children and your servants—immortal souls committed to your care, should receive instruction from the word of God, so that if it should please the Lord and giver of life to bless your instruction, they might not live like the beasts that perish? Have you thus spent the past year, or have you, on the contrary, lived in the neglect of the word of God? Have you had more regard to worldly expediency, than to the plain and positive commands of God? Have you, while full of affection for your children, and kind and liberal to your servants, forgotten their immortal souls? If this be the case, I ask you again, my brethren, what account can you give to God?

Further, God has given to us His sacraments and the ministry of His word; and these are means of grace. The sacraments are outward and visible signs. The thing signified by one is a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness; and the thing signified by the other is the body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the *faithful* in the Lord's Supper. You all have received the outward sign of baptism, and many of you have received the outward sign of the Lord's Supper. Have you then, my brethren, made it manifest during the past year, that you have received the thing signified, as well as the sign? Have

you afforded decisive proof of a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness,—proof which can be understood, and which must bring conviction to every mind, so as to declare that you are no longer in your natural state, but have indeed been born of the Spirit of God? The proof is that you renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh. Have those who come to the Lord's Supper afforded decisive proof, that they are the faithful, who alone can verily and indeed take and receive the body and blood of Christ? By the word faithful is meant believers, those to whom the kingdom of heaven has been opened, who believe the gospel of the grace of God, who have been sanctified and quickened by the Holy Ghost, who are heirs of God through Christ, who have been saved from the curse of sin, and the power of sin, and the love of sin; who are no longer of the world, and who do not live after the world, because they have been chosen out of the world by the electing grace of God, that they should not perish with the world, but be saved through Christ for ever. The ministry of God's word consists in the public reading and preaching of the word of God. These have always been neglected and despised, as contemptible and foolish, by unenlightened men; but they have been in every age, the power of God unto salvation to all who believe.

How have you acted, my brethren, during the past year in reference to the ministry of God's word? Have you been constant in your attendance upon it, eager to hear the words of truth, and grace, and mercy, which the God of all grace has sent into our fallen world? Have you come with meekness, and reverence, and humility,

knowing that whosoever will not receive the kingdom of God, as a little child shall not enter therein? Have you, as St. Peter writes, desired the sincere milk of the word, that ye might grow thereby? or, on the contrary, have you neglected the ministry of God's word, in compliance with the ungodly example of others? Have you despised it, in consequence of the blindness of your own mind,—that carnal mind which is enmity against God,—that evil mind, which hates the gospel of Christ, and loves darkness rather than light? If this be the case, what account can you give to God?

Lastly, God has given to us the Sabbath, the day of rest, the type of that glorious rest, which remaineth to the people of God; and God has said, Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. How have you observed the Sabbath? Have you laid aside all worldly business, and all worldly pleasures, and all worldly studies, that you might refresh, and strengthen, and elevate, and ennoble your minds, by undisturbed communion with God, by prayer and praise and thanksgiving, by meditation on His holy word, by the contemplation of His great and glorious perfections, by examining the scheme of redemption, as it is unfolded in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by anticipating in the full confidence of faith, the glory which shall be revealed at the second advent of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Have you thus spent the Sabbath, or have you spent it partly on business and partly in pleasure, and altogether without God? Have you profaned God's holy day, by unholy occupations? Have you felt it wearisome and a restraint, and been glad when it was past, attributing to the Sabbath that gloom, which has no existence, but in the dark and godless minds of sinful, and unbelieving

men? My brethren, what account can you give to God?

In conclusion, I would direct your attention to the language of the text. Observe that there is no possible way by which you may escape. This account you must give. It is said *every one* of us, and it is also said every one of us *shall* give; and observe further, "shall give account of *himself*." Many shall have to give account for forty, sixty, and eighty years; and truly it will be a fearful account! So many years spent without God, in direct opposition to the end for which they were created, and sent into this world; so many years spent in the indulgence of all worldly and carnal lusts; the heart and all the members unmortified; sin reigning in undisturbed possession of body and soul. So many years in the service of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and the Lord, the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth, unknown, unserved, unworshipped; and all this in opposition to the testimony of the word of God.

Such an account, I say, will indeed be a fearful one; and it is to be given to that God who can destroy body and soul in hell. Surely the Lord's people have reason to be thankful that, God has chosen them out of this fearful state, that Jesus has saved them from their sins, that by the grace of God they are what they are, that that grace has separated them from an ungodly world, that they are no longer servants in bondage to sin, but are sons and heirs of God through Christ. "Happy are the people that are in such a case; yea, blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God."

XIII.

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED AND THE SECURITY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

"COME, MY PEOPLE, ENTER THOU INTO THY CHAMBERS, AND SHUT THY DOORS ABOUT THEE: HIDE THYSELF AS IT WERE FOR A LITTLE MOMENT, UNTIL THE INDIGNATION BE OVERPAST. FOR, BEHOLD, THE LORD COMETH OUT OF HIS PLACE TO PUNISH THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH FOR THEIR INIQUITY: THE EARTH ALSO SHALL DISCLOSE HER BLOOD, AND SHALL NO MORE COVER HER SLAIN."—(Isaiah xxvi. 20, 21.)

THIS and the preceding chapter are chiefly employed, in celebrating the faithfulness and truth of God. God had declared that He will save His people and destroy His enemies, and these chapters, by showing the execution of God's purpose, both with respect to His people and to His enemies, do manifestly prove that He is both faithful and true; and thus they are adapted to support and comfort His people, and to warn the wicked so that he may turn from the error of his way. The following verse, which is closely connected with our text, says, "In that day the Lord with His sore and

great and strong sword shall punish Leviathan the piercing serpent, even Leviathan that crooked serpent; and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." And Bishop Lowth remarks on this verse that, these animals are used allegorically for great potentates, enemies and persecutors of the people of God. The Lord, then, is coming out of His place with His sore, and great, and strong sword to punish all the inhabitants of the earth, and all the enemies of His people; and the slaughter, which this sword will make, will be so general, and so dreadful, that God is graciously pleased to give His people warning of the approaching judgment.

In addressing you, my brethren, last Sunday, on this passage of Scripture, I was led to speak of those enemies and persecutors of God's people, to whom the most distinguished place is assigned, both in the Scriptures of truth and in the history of the world: ancient Babylon and Rome, both pagan and papal, the mystical Babylon of the New Testament, have been pre-eminent as persecutors. The former has long since received her punishment, and though, on account of her greatness and magnificence, she is called by the prophet, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency; and, on account of her palace and hanging gardens, and other extraordinary works of art, she was considered one of the greatest wonders of the world; yet, God having pronounced her doom, and having swept her with the besom of destruction, she now presents only a mass of ruins, and the country around her has been for ages so desolated and depopulated, that the words of Scripture are literally fulfilled: "It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation, neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there:

neither shall the shepherds make their folds there: but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there: and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures: and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there." The very same destruction is hastening upon Rome, the mystical Babylon; for in the account of her destruction, which is given in Rev. xviii., the apostle says, "After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Rejoice over her, ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." It is possible that some persons may not perceive the connection between what was stated last Sunday respecting the Church and empire of Rome, and the coming of the Lord out of his place to punish

the inhabitants of the earth. And for the information of such persons, I would beg attention for a short time, before I proceed to the second part of our subject; and I shall hope to show both the reality and importance of that connection.

In the seventh chapter of the book of Daniel there is an account of a vision, which the prophet had, and in which there was revealed to him the history of the world, in the succession of the great monarchies of the earth, from that period until the coming of the Son of man with the clouds of heaven. The four great monarchies, the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman, which have been connected with each other in succession, were exhibited to the prophet under the emblem of four beasts. The last beast, which was the Roman empire, had ten horns, and among them there came up another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots. And these ten horns with the little horn are then explained in verses 24, 25. "The ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and

all dominions shall serve and obey Him." With respect to those ten kingdoms and the other kingdom represented by the little horn, all learned Protestant commentators have understood that they were the ten kingdoms into which, after its fall, the western Roman empire was divided, and that the other was the papacy, which became a kingdom, when under the protection of Charles the Great. The Bishop of Rome seized upon two neighbouring states, over which and the state of the Church he reigns as a temporal prince, wearing a triple crown. In Rev. xvii. the same things were more clearly and circumstantially made known to St. John. The Church of Rome is represented as a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The seven heads are explained in the ninth verse, as signifying seven mountains on which the woman sitteth, and it is known to every one that Rome is seated on seven hills. The ten horns are explained in verse 12 as in Daniel. They signify ten kings, or kingdoms, and it is added, these have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast; and then, in verse 16, it is said, "The ten horns, which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore (a term applied to the Church of Rome on account of her apostacy), and shall make her desolate and naked and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." Here her destruction is said to be accomplished by the ten kingdoms, while in other parts of Scripture it is expressly ascribed to the coming of the Lord in indignation and in flaming fire; and hence, as there can be no opposition between different parts of the Word of God, it is manifest that the hating, and spoiling, and pillaging of the woman by the ten king-

doms, and the coming of the Lord in His glory and majesty, are events which must take place about the same period of time. That this hating and spoiling and pillaging of the apostate Church of Rome has commenced must be evident to all persons, who compare passing events with the Word of God. One of the ten kingdoms, namely France, has renounced the authority of the Church of Rome, and that Church has lost the support of her eldest son by there being no longer a king of France. The other kingdoms do also hate her and are struggling to emancipate themselves; but as it is the work of infidelity, with which Europe is overspread, no one can contemplate what is passing without the most fearful apprehensions. But it is well to know that those events, appalling as they are, become, through the goodness of God, the assurance and pledge that our redemption draweth nigh. They are as so many messengers announcing that the Lord is at hand. In the view then of the coming of the Lord and of these judgments, which are to precede and to accompany Him; the words of our text with which God addresses His people, are peculiarly consolatory and important.

The Lord is coming in indignation to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; and the destruction, which He will make with His sore, and great, and strong sword will be most terrible, overwhelming, and irresistible: but dreadful as it will be, there are those who shall remain unhurt, and who shall be hidden in a place of safety in the day of the Lord's fierce anger. And to this, the second part of our subject, namely, the security of God's people, I would now call your attention. "Come, My people," says God, "enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about

thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

This address is a plain and positive declaration of God's gracious care of His people, and it is intended to impart to them real support and real comfort, while under the greatest trials, and in the view of the most awful dangers and calamities: so as to be able confidently to say, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." Everything, indeed, that God's people know of Him, from the sure testimony of His word, the dispensations of His providence, and the unspeakable comfort of the Holy Ghost, are distinct pledges and manifest tokens of His gracious care and everlasting love. Each individual of God's people must have had most blessed experience of this truth in the midst of trials, and troubles, and cares, and afflictions; for these are the times in which the religion of the Bible is brought to the test: and when God's people do really perceive its value, and feel its power, and enjoy its comfort. And it is right that they should assure their hearts that in every future trial and affliction, and distressing care and sorrow, they shall have the same free access to the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, that He will be as gracious in time to come as He has been in time past—that He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Our God, in this respect, is altogether unlike His creatures. He is always gracious, and it is His property always to have mercy. We are changeable and uncertain creatures; we smile to-day, and perhaps we frown to-morrow; but God looks always upon His people with a smile of pure

delight, and complacency, and approbation; and this, not because of anything in them to recommend them to such distinguished favour, but because He views them all in His Son, in whom they are accepted and forgiven, and in whom they will be saved with an everlasting salvation.

It were easy to multiply proof from the Scriptures to show God's gracious care of His people, but I shall select only a few instances, and these shall be furnished by those recorded facts, which show us how God punished the ungodly, and saved His own people. The first proof is derived from the account of the Deluge. God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth; that all flesh was corrupt, that all had turned away from Him, and that the earth was filled with violence and with blood; and God declared that He would destroy man from off the face of the earth; but in the midst of wrath God remembered mercy, and He was pleased to choose Noah and to preserve his family. He gave him warning of the approaching danger, and commanded him to provide for his safety by preparing an ark for himself and his house; and in order to their perfect security, God himself shut them in. He closed their doors about them at that time of His indignation, so that this little company of God's people might be safe amidst the wreck of the world. A beautiful type of the Church, and presented to us as such both in the Scriptures and in our baptismal service. The Church was chosen in Christ, and will be saved in Christ, and kept in safety amidst all the waves of this troublesome world, and however violently those waves may beat against her, she shall never sink; but shall ride triumphantly amidst the fury of the storm—her God being with her—her glory and her defence.

The second proof of God's gracious care of His people is found in His preservation of Lot, when God overthrew the cities of the plain. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah had given themselves over to every abomination, they had filled up the measure of their iniquity, and nothing could now avert God's righteous indignation—nothing could avert the thunderbolt of His wrath. Had there been ten righteous persons in those cities, God would have spared them. Oh how few is the number of righteous persons compared with the number of the ungodly! But ten righteous persons could not be found. God, however, would not destroy the righteous with the wicked, and therefore before He rained fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven upon those cities, He sent two angels to Sodom, and they came to Lot, and said, "Hast thou here any besides? son-in-law, and thy sons and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place; for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it." In this warning given to Lot, we see the gracious care of God for His people; but it is still more manifest from a circumstance mentioned in the narrative. It is said that while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him. And they brought him forth, and set him without the city. But this is not all, for God's gracious care of His people is still further manifest from another circumstance mentioned, and from which we learn that it is not possible for God to punish the wicked, until after He has separated His

own people from them: for when He desired Lot to haste and escape to Zoar, He said, "I cannot do anything until thou be come thither." This gracious care of God, this tender affection, this everlasting love for His people, places Him under a restraint, and makes it impossible that He can do anything which would endanger their safety, or involve them in the fearful overthrow of the ungodly.

The third proof of God's gracious care of His people is furnished by the preservation of the children of Israel, when He destroyed all the firstborn of the land of Egypt. The children of Israel were commanded to take a lamb and to kill it, and to take the blood and to strike it on the two sideposts and on the upper doorpost of the house where they should eat it. "For," says God, "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you when I smite the land of Egypt." This transaction was typical of redemption through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and as such it assures us that in that great judgment, which is yet to come, God will pass over and spare all those, who are sprinkled with the blood of that Lamb, which taketh away the sin of the world.

The fourth and last proof, which I shall bring forward to show the gracious care of God for His people, is to be found in Ezekiel ix. Jerusalem had become like Sodom, vile and corrupt before God, and God had determined on her destruction, by bringing against her

the King of Babylon and his army. But, as in Sodom God spared Lot, so in Jerusalem, God would spare His people; and to assure them of this for their support and comfort, God was pleased in a vision to represent to the prophet the certainty of their sure preservation. The prophet saw six men with slaughter weapons in their hands, and another man among them clothed with linen, and a writer's inkhorn by his side: and he heard the Lord say to this man, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry, for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said, Go ye after him through the city, and smite; let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women; but *come not near any man upon whom is the mark.* These four instances of God's gracious care of His people, are abundantly sufficient to enable us to enter into the meaning of our text; and to convey to us the richest comfort in the view of the greatest dangers, and of the final judgment. 1, God will provide a place of safety for His people; 2, God will suspend His judgments until His people are safe; 3, God will save them through the blood of the atonement; and 4, God will mark them as vessels of mercy to be spared, in the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Here, my brethren, is Scripture truth, and here are Scripture facts. If we look back we see what God has done, and if we look forward we are told what God will do. The very same separation between His people, and the ungodly will take place at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Matt. xxiv. we read, "Then

shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other." These things do so plainly manifest the supremely blessed state of God's people, their happiness and their security, both in this world and in that which is to come, that every person, who hears of them, should act like Moses, who chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. And all who will not make the same choice, may know beforehand what they have to expect. Noah was a preacher of righteousness to the men of his generation, but there is no evidence that they attended to his warning. They saw him making preparation for that judgment which was impending, and there can be no doubt, but he appeared foolish in the extreme to the scoffers of his age, when they saw him building an ark, or ship, on dry land, and at a distance from the sea; but nevertheless the flood came and took them all away. In like manner in Sodom, when Lot warned his relatives, he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. The Egyptians were warned before the commencement of each plague, but they hardened their hearts as the proofs of God's power, and of their own danger became more clearly manifest, and at length they all perished in the Red Sea. The Jews were warned from age to age, by God rising up early and sending His pro-

phets; but His prophets they scorned, rejected, and put to death. At length He sent His Son, an ambassador of peace, but plainly denouncing vengeance if they persisted in their rebellion. The threatened vengeance was despised, the message of peace was rejected, the Son of God was crucified. And then, having filled up the measure of their iniquities, the wrath of God came upon them to the uttermost; their temple was burned, their city was destroyed, their country was plundered and left desolate, nearly a million and a half perished by famine and by sword, in the siege of Jerusalem; while one thousand were made prisoners, and, according to the word of the Lord by Moses, were sold unto their enemies for bondmen and bondwomen.

These are facts, my brethren, recorded in the history of the world, and deeply recorded in the unparalleled suffering of that extraordinary people. Let us reflect upon those facts, let us compare them with the Word of God, and let us remember that the majority of men have always been wrong, always in error, always leagued against God, and, as the instances cited do clearly show, have always perished in their sins. Let us then not follow the multitude to do evil, nor walk with them in the broad way, which leadeth to destruction; and let us discharge all our duties under the full persuasion that the Lord is at hand; that He is coming out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, when the earth shall disclose her blood and no more cover her slain.

XIV.

THE WORLD OVERCOME BY FAITH.

"WHATSOEVER IS BORN OF GOD OVERCOMETH THE WORLD: AND THIS IS THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD, EVEN OUR FAITH. WHO IS HE THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD, BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD."—(1 John v. 4, 5.)

THE great facts of the gospel history are the foundation of its doctrines, and the influence, which both the facts and the doctrines are designed to have, upon all persons, who believe, is illustrated by examples.

As the facts are the same now that they have ever been, and the doctrines are also the same, we may justly expect that there will be the same influence, and the same examples, as those which were afforded, when those facts and those doctrines were first made known to the world.

The great facts of the gospel history are these,—the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven of Jesus the Son of God. The doctrines, which are founded upon the facts, are these,—regeneration, or the new birth, corresponding to the birth of Jesus, the Son of God. The forgiveness of sin, in connection with a

death unto sin, corresponding to the death of Jesus, the Son of God; and a new life, together with the imputation of righteousness, and admission into the family of God, corresponding to the resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God; to whom it was declared, on His resurrection, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee."*

The influence which those facts and those doctrines have upon all who believe is this, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world;" and that this is a real and not an imaginary influence is illustrated and demonstrated, by those numerous examples, which are recorded in the New Testament, which fill the page in the history of the Church of Christ, and which are to be found in real life, amongst all who are God's children, who have been quickened by God's Spirit, and brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light.

From these premises, then, it is right to conclude that, the faith of a Christian is not a mere opinion. The doctrines to be believed, and the influence to be produced, are so closely connected, that the one cannot exist without the other. And this is a most important view of the facts and doctrines of the gospel history; because it enables us to ascertain, whether we ourselves do really know and believe those facts and those doctrines, or not. Where they are known, and believed the world is overcome, and where the world is not overcome, they are not known, and, therefore, they are not believed. This is a great and important truth, of which proof is afforded in the life of every child of God. Search in all ages, search in all countries, search amongst all ranks and conditions of men, and wherever

* Acts xiii. 33.

you can find those who have been born of God—God's spiritual children—there you will surely find in every case, however many the infirmities of all, that they have overcome the world. Every man, who professes to be a Christian man, must submit his faith to this test; and if it will abide this trial, his faith is a living and true faith. It is, as the apostle Paul says, the faith of God's elect; but if it will not abide this trial, then his faith is a dead faith; for the apostle adds, "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." And it is so certain that nothing but faith can obtain this victory, that the apostle triumphantly asks, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Let us, then, receive, as one of the maxims of the kingdom of God, the truth here laid down by the apostle, namely, that "whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world;" and with the view to our own edification, let us consider the subject of our text, under these two heads,—

1st, What is that world that is overcome by faith? and—

2ndly, What is that faith that overcomes the world? And may the Lord the Spirit be our teacher and guide.

1. Our first inquiry is respecting that world that is overcome by faith. And this same apostle, in another part of this epistle, tells us, what he means by the world. In chap. ii. 15, the apostle writes, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world, and the world passeth away

and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

According, then, to St. John, who wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, or sensuality; the lust of the eye, or covetousness; and the pride of life, or the vainglorious pursuit of the honours, riches, and splendours of this life. These compose that world, which is overcome by faith, and the victory that overcomes them is more deserving of praise, than all the great battles and the great victories, that have been celebrated by the most eloquent writers of Greece and Rome, of France and England.

To overcome the world is to overcome ourselves. It is to overcome the strong and impetuous desires of a corrupt fleshly nature,—those desires which were good when God created man, but which, in fallen man, are described as lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

Is it not in accordance with man's fallen nature to indulge in sensuality, in covetousness, and in ambitious pursuits? And how many of the sons of men do indulge in them, to their own temporal and eternal ruin, and to the ruin of their families, their friends, and their fellow-men! Sensuality shows itself in various forms, such as gluttony, drunkenness, lasciviousness, and sloth; debasing, degrading, and brutalizing men, reducing them even lower than the beasts that perish. Sensuality has such an effect upon the mind of man, and upon its faculties, that the man lives as if he had no soul, as if he were not an accountable creature, as if there were no conscience to condemn, as if there were no death, and would be no judgment, as if there were

no worm that shall never die, no fire that shall never be quenched; and which fire has been prepared for the devil and his angels. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," said God, in an early age of the world, "for that he also is flesh;"* and again, we read in the same chapter, "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence, and God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth."† This is God's account of every man, while he is in his natural state, and therefore every man who has not been born of God, and who has not the Spirit of God dwelling in him, is a mere sepulchre of flesh, in which an immortal soul is entombed. Such a soul now sleeps the sleep of sin, and unless awakened and quickened by the Holy Ghost, it will surely and for ever sleep the sleep of death. Oh, what a gift, what a treasure is that faith, which overcomes the world! "And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Covetousness shows itself too visibly, in almost all the transactions of men; and it so far prevails that even in the ordinary and petty dealings of one man with another, there is shown, at times, a total want of principle, and of conscience. This covetous spirit is so predominant that, there is an overreaching and a taking of advantage, whenever it is supposed that fraud can be committed, without detection. There is the scant measure, and the light weight, and the adulteration of food and medicine. And though this covetous spirit may act with such caution, as not to be punishable by human

* Gen. vi. 3. † Gen. vi. 11, 12.

laws; yet it cannot escape divine notice, nor divine vengeance. It is a violation of the law of God, and in the sight of God it is theft, and fraud, and robbery. "Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord; shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"*

It may, indeed, be said, that this is taking the worst view of the subject, and that these are extreme cases; but, I believe, that this covetous spirit is in every person, though not in all persons alike indulged, and that it is truly overcome only in those persons who are born of God. In this commercial country, does it not frequently occur that in individuals of rank, and of wealth, and education; who for a series of years have sustained the highest character for honour, and integrity, and fair dealing, have been detected in such acts of fraud and robbery, as have exposed them to the just vengeance of the violated law. If I were to mention the names of such persons, as have become notorious by their evil deeds, during the last twenty years, I should indeed have a long list. And some of those persons were considered highly respectable and honourable men, until their evil deeds were brought to light.

You, my brethren, may suppose that the language, which I have used should be applied only to such persons; and I most willingly allow that, we ought to presume men are innocent until they are proved to be guilty; but my observations merely go the length of saying, that this covetous spirit is in every man, as one of the worst principles of his fallen and corrupt nature. And so certain is its existence in every man, and so necessary is it to guard against its subtle influence, that

* Jer. v 9.

our blessed Lord addressed, even His own disciples, in these words—"Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the hings which he possesseth."*

On this topic of covetousness, you will do well to read the sixth and seventh chapters of the book of Joshua, and you will there find what the sin of Achan was, and how fearfully it was visited by Almighty God. When the children of Israel were sent to destroy Jericho, they were commanded not to take, nor to touch anything in the city; because that idolatrous city was cursed and devoted to destruction; but Achan could not resist his covetous propensity—the lust of the eyes. He took of the accursed thing, and the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel. And when Achan was questioned by Joshua, he replied in these words—"I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel: when I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment"—here was the lust of the eyes—"and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them, and behold they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it."

The pride of life shows itself amongst all classes of men, and on almost all occasions. It tempts some men to the unremitting pursuit of the honours, glories, and splendours of this life, insomuch that they willingly sacrifice the soul and its eternal interest, in order to gain this world; though they must know, if they will reflect, that the fashion of this world passeth away, and the lust thereof; and that they themselves have no

* Luke xii. 15.

certainty that life will be prolonged beyond the present moment. The pride of life tempts men to foolish and criminal vanity and ostentation, and to habits of expense and extravagance, which are most ruinous in their consequences, and are most hateful in the sight of God: for these things, as St. John says, are not of the Father, but are of the world, and if any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him. The pride of life shows itself in dress, in furniture, in the expense of the table, and other domestic concerns. It tempts men and women to affect appearances, which are unbecoming in professing Christians, which are unsuited to their station in life, and which expose them to many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.* If it were not for the excess of expense, in which so many persons indulge, and by which they seek to gratify the pride of life, there would be ampler means at our disposal for the relief of the poor, and for carrying on the Lord's work throughout the world.

My dear brethren, this is only an outline of that world which is overcome by faith; let us now inquire after that faith which overcomes the world. St. John says, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith; who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Our text asserts that the principle, which overcomes the world is faith—it is believing that Jesus is the Son of God. The power of faith is indeed great. The power of gravitation is great in nature, and by means of it, and by God's appointment, the whole universe—the millions of suns and their systems—is kept in har-

* 1 Tim. vi. 9.

monious order; but gravitation acts only upon matter. The principle of faith acts upon mind. It enables all who are born of God to overcome the world, to overcome themselves, to overcome the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The faith which overcomes the world is simply and strongly expressed in our text; it is believing that Jesus is the Son of God. There must be something great, and wonderful, and blessed, and glorious in believing that Jesus is the Son of God. This is to be our inquiry. We want to know, what that faith is which overcomes the world.

Now, in order to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, it is necessary to be made acquainted with the great facts of the Gospel history, concerning the Lord Jesus, namely, His birth, His death, and His resurrection. All the other facts in the life of our blessed Lord, during the time of His sojourn upon earth, do arrange themselves in their respective places around those great and glorious facts.

Look first at the birth of Jesus. The angel said to the Virgin Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.* Look next at the life of Jesus. See how He was opposed to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. See how He valued the things and the persons that are despised by the world; and in what low esteem He held the things and the men of the world. Hear the lessons which He gave to His disciples,—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; enter ye in at

* Luke i. 35.

the strait gate; walk in the narrow way; ye cannot serve God and mammon." Answer His question, if you can. It has remained unanswered for nearly two thousand years—"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"* Look, in the next place, at the death of Christ. Review all the circumstances connected with it, and hear what the Scriptures say concerning it. They say that He came into the world to save sinners; that the Lord had laid on Him the iniquity of us all; that He suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God; that He was made a curse for us, and that He made peace through the blood of His cross. Look, in the last place, at His glorious resurrection; see it vouched and attested by extraordinary signs, both in heaven and on earth, by a great earthquake, and by the Angel of the Lord, who descended from heaven, and who said, "He is risen, come and see the place where the Lord lay."

What do these facts teach us? They teach us that the Almighty Father hath given His Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification;† and to believe this is to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. This is that faith, whereby we are born of God. This is that faith, by which we overcome the world. This is that faith, which furnishes the Christian with all his principles, and all his motives, and all his energy to engage in everything that is great, and good, in his work of faith and labour of love; and which brings glory to God and the greatest benefit to men, both for time and for eternity. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the

* Luke viii. 36. † Rom. iv. 25.

world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

The great facts of the gospel history, and the doctrines which are founded upon them, do necessarily and invariably influence all who believe, so that, as the text declares, the world is overcome by all, who truly do believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

The believer will reason thus with himself, If Jesus the Son of God came into the world to save sinners, by the shedding of His own blood, in what an awful state must the world be! How unworthy of the affection of an immortal soul, and how dangerous it must be to set those affections upon it! If Jesus the Son of God died for our sins, what a tremendous evil sin must be, and how fearful a thing it must be to indulge in sin, and to be a companion of those persons, who make a mock at sin. If Jesus the Son of God was raised from the dead, then sin has been put away, reconciliation has been made, and pardon obtained for a guilty world.

Those inferences will be drawn from those facts by all who believe that Jesus is the Son of God; and hence, by means of those facts and the doctrines founded upon those facts, as channels for conveying the grace of God, all who believe will overcome the world.

May we, my dear friends and brethren, by overcoming the world, make it clearly manifest that we are born of God. Let it be manifest, by overcoming the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, that we are indeed risen with Christ, and that the Spirit of Christ dwells in us. May we reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

XV.

THE ENGLISH REFORMATION, AND JOHN BRADFORD THE MARTYR.

"WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOUR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST."
(Phil. iii. 20.)

THIS day is memorable in the annals of the English Reformation. On the first day of July, in the year 1555, John Bradford, Prebendary of St. Paul's, in the city of London, was committed to the flames in Smithfield. He was one of those men of God, strong in faith, and of undaunted courage, who braved the fury of the Church of Rome, and shed his blood in the defence of divine and eternal truth. The memory of such men is blessed, and they should be held in affectionate, and grateful, and everlasting remembrance. Look at England in the fifteenth, and look at England in the nineteenth century, and to what is the difference between the two to be ascribed? It is to be ascribed to the Reformation in the sixteenth century. There was then a remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit, inferior only to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost; and the consequence was, that those

who received the Holy Spirit, both in our own country and on the continent of Europe, did clearly see the difference between the religion then taught by the Church, and the religion taught by the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. The religion taught by the apostles is contained in the Bible, and therefore the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants. The Bible is the word of God. The Bible contains the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. God has given to us the Bible, like the globe on which we dwell, rounded to perfection.

It is to the Reformation in the sixteenth century—to the translation of Holy Scripture into our own Saxon language, and to laws framed for the most part in accordance with the law of God; and to those laws, administered by judges of great ability, and of inflexible integrity, that we are indebted under God, and to His grace, for the large and increasing measure of civil and religious liberty, which we enjoy. In the sixteenth century the Church, and the nation emerged from a state of bondage. The Holy Scriptures did then make known in our own language that liberty, with which Christ has made us free. And we cannot fail to observe that civil, mental, and religious bondage are wholly incompatible with the religion of Christ, and never to be willingly endured by the children of God. Great have been the sufferings of the Church in the past ages of its history, and those sufferings have arisen, partly because of the total opposition between the opinions and practices of the world, and the opinions and practices of real Christians. In these sufferings the Church of God has had to look for support and comfort to the promises of God, and to the grace and presence of the Saviour,

cheered and animated by the blessed hope expressed in our text—"We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

As there are few subjects of greater importance, so there is none that will be found more influential, than the hope of our Lord's coming. The hope of the Lord's coming, in His kingdom and glory is well calculated to comfort the heart, and to raise the thoughts and affections from earth to heaven. And this being the case, we may well suppose that this was the reason, which led our blessed Lord and His apostles to direct the attention of His disciples to the great and glorious fact of His coming again, the second time without sin unto salvation. We need only to read the gospel, the Acts of the Apostles, and the letters, which they addressed both to churches and individuals, in order to see that the coming of the Lord Jesus in His kingdom, and the gathering together of all His saints unto Himself, are the events upon which they would fix our attention.

When the Church was suffering from those severe persecutions, which it had to endure in its earlier days, then it was supported and comforted by faith in the Saviour's promise, that He would return from heaven and see His people again; that then their hearts should rejoice, and that their joy no man should take from them; and therefore believers were ready to say, in the words of the apostle, "If we suffer, we shall reign with Him. The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." But when it pleased God that those persecutions should cease, and when the Church was patronized by the civil power, and the ministers of religion were advanced to high places, then the love of the world

prevailed, and then the corruption of the Christian faith progressed, and then an apostasy took place, and then the man of sin, as predicted in the word of God, was revealed. The Christian Church then ceased to look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was to raise His saints and take them to sit with Him in the kingdom of God. The Bishop of Rome henceforth commenced his reign, with his cardinals and dignified ecclesiastics—a reign which has been the scourge of one half the world, and the wonder and the terror of the other. Neither the exercise of reason, nor the rights of conscience, nor the blessings of civil liberty were to be enjoyed, but at the pleasure and with the permission of him who exalteth himself above all that is called God. The Church and court of Rome have been guilty of more pious frauds, and tyranny, and cruelty, than have ever been practised by any portion of civilized mankind. Hence the worship of the Virgin Mary, the invocation of saints, and the adoration of images, transubstantiation, indulgences, and justification by works. But when it pleased God to raise up those holy men and greatest benefactors of mankind—the reformers (whose praise is in all the churches of the saints)—then those Holy Scriptures of truth, the sacred deposit of the faith, were given to the people in their own tongue, and by the bold and faithful preaching of the gospel of the grace of God, and by the free and extensive circulation of the Holy Scriptures, many were brought to renounce all communion with the Church of Rome.

The period of the Reformation, both on the continent of Europe, and in England, was marked by a repetition, in their most cruel form of those dreadful persecutions,

which were employed against Christianity in the first ages of the Church. At the period of the Reformation it pleased God, in great compassion and mercy, both to the Church and to the world, to raise up men of large and noble minds, accomplished with all that human learning could bestow, and enriched with the manifold gifts of grace and of the Holy Ghost. Such men were Luther in Germany, Calvin in France, and Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, and Bradford in England. These men, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, did boldly protest against the corruption, and idolatry, and tyranny of the Church of Rome. These men were mighty in the Scriptures, and they ceased not to teach and to preach the Lord Jesus Christ, and a full and free salvation, through faith in His blood. The consequence was the same as that which always attends, in a greater or less degree, the faithful preaching of the gospel of the grace of God,—much opposition was shown by men, and a most abundant blessing descended from God.

At this period of suffering and trial, the expectation of the coming of the Saviour was again revived in the Church; for when Christians suffer persecution for Christ's sake in an earthly kingdom, they must earnestly desire that the kingdom of their Lord and Saviour may come, in which kingdom there shall be no sin, nor suffering, nor sorrow.

When the Church was suffering from pagan persecution, during the first three centuries, it was cheered and supported by the hope of our Lord's advent in His glorious kingdom; and such was the power of that hope to elevate the mind, and to enable the Christian to triumph in the view of suffering and of death, that many persons did covet the martyr's death, because they

believed the testimony of the Scriptures, respecting the martyr's crown, and the exalted dignity and transcendent glory which shall be enjoyed by all the faithful, patient, and loving servants of the Lord Jesus.

When the Church was suffering from papal persecution, at the period of the Reformation, and when the fires of Smithfield were lighted, and the martyr's pile was erected and blazed in every corner of the land, the Lord's people derived their support and comfort from the same source—they looked for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. And now, in our day, when clouds are gathering thick around, and hearts begin to fail, when nations are so much shaken, and the foundations of the earth seem to be out of course, we must look to Him who has been the hope and the support of His people in every age. The foundation of God standeth sure. The promises of God are exceedingly great and precious; they are as numerous as the stars of heaven; they are as fixed and firm as the everlasting hills. The grace of God is plenteous, as the unfathomed waters of the sea; the comforts of God's Spirit are neither few nor small; and the crown of glory, which the Lord hath promised, is a crown of glory that shall never fade away. Let us therefore look *to* the Saviour, and let us look *for* the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, "who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom." (2 Tim. iv. 1.) May we, in faith and patience, follow the example of the noble army of martyrs. One of that noble band suffered as on this day, three hundred years ago.

John Bradford was burnt at Smithfield, at nine o'clock on Monday, the first day of July, in the year 1555. Bradford was engaged in civil affairs, and was in the

way to wealth and honour, while he was yet a young man. He is said to have been particularly fond of adorning himself with gold chains, and rings, and jewels, in order to set off his person and make a fine appearance. But it was ordered, in the good providence of God, that he should hear a sermon, which was preached before the king by Bishop Latimer. He was at that time studying law at the Inner Temple, but he now devoted himself to the study of divinity, and although he had both gifts and calling to have employed himself profitably in civil affairs, yet such was his love for Christ, and his desire to preach the glorious gospel of the blessed God, that he changed his course of life and study, in order that he might give himself up to meditation on the word of God, and preparation for holy orders. In 1548 he became a member of Catherine Hall, Cambridge, and was soon chosen a fellow of Pembroke Hall. At that place he was urged by Dr. Martin Bucer, the professor of divinity at Cambridge, to enter into holy orders. Bradford pleaded in excuse that he was unfit for the office of a preacher of the gospel of Christ. But Bucer said, "If thou hast not fine wheaten bread, yet give the poor people barley bread, or whatever else the Lord hath committed to thee." He then took orders, was made a prebendary of St. Paul's, and for three years he continued teaching and preaching Jesus Christ; during which time he was a powerful instrument in promoting the reformed religion, being one of the most popular preachers in the kingdom. It is said of him that he sharply attacked and reproved sin, sweetly he preached Christ crucified, forcibly he opposed heresies and errors, and earnestly he persuaded to a godly life. His zeal in preaching the gospel, and

in exposing the dangerous and idolatrous doctrines of Rome, soon led to his apprehension in the reign of Queen Mary, and he was committed to prison. While in prison he wrote those meditations and letters which have so much delighted and edified the people of God, and have been esteemed as a great treasure by the Christian Church. The opinion which he entertained of fallen man in general, and of himself in particular, may be gathered from that saying of his, which has become so memorable. As he lay in prison, he saw a criminal being led to execution, and he exclaimed, "There goes John Bradford, but for the grace of God." In one of the letters of this godly martyr, he says, "The way to heaven is not the wide way of the world, but it is the strait way, which few walk in: for few live godly in Christ Jesus, few regard the life to come, few remember the day of judgment, few remember how Christ will deny them before His Father, that do deny Him here, few consider that Christ will be ashamed of them in the last day, who are ashamed of His truth and true doctrine; few cast up their accounts what will be laid to their charge in the day of vengeance; few regard the condemnation of their own conscience, in doing that which they inwardly disallow; few love God better than their goods."

When it was announced to this servant of the Lord that on the following day he was to be burnt, he put off his cap, and said, "I thank God for it; I have longed for this day a long time, and therefore it cometh not now to me suddenly, but as a thing waited for every day; the Lord make me worthy thereof." He conversed much on death, and the kingdom of heaven, and the abounding of iniquity in those days. In the evening,

half a dozen of his friends came to see him, with whom he spent the time in prayer, and other profitable exercises so cheerfully, that all were surprised who heard and saw him.

When he came to the stake he fell on his face, and prayed; and then lifting up his hands and his eyes to heaven, he said, "O England, England, repent of thy sins, repent of thy sins; *beware of idolatry, beware of Antichrist; take heed they do not deceive thee.*"

My dear friends, the martyrs suffered in the cause of true religion, and true religion is the same in every age. The blessings of true religion were purchased by the blood of Christ, and when those blessings of true religion were obscured and disfigured by Romish corruption and superstition, they were cleansed from all such defilement by the blood of godly martyrs. May we highly prize the blessings, which come to us through such a channel. May we think humbly of ourselves, as Bradford did; and, like him, may we worthily magnify the grace of God. It is that grace which brings salvation. It is by grace that we are saved.

England, in our day, does as much need a warning voice, as when John Bradford was at the stake. "Beware," he said, "of Antichrist; beware of the Romish Antichrist; beware of the wolves in sheep's clothing." In writing to some men who were not rightly persuaded in the true, comfortable, and necessary doctrine of God's holy election and predestination, he says, "Ah, dear hearts, be not faint-hearted for these evil days, which are come to try us and purify us, that we may the more be partners of God's holiness: as to ourselves, so to the world, we shall be better known. Continue to walk in the fear of the Lord, as ye have well begun. Keep your-

selves pure, as I hope you do, from the rotten Romish, yea, Antichristian religion. Reverently read God's word, thereto joining prayer, that as in reading you hear God speak unto you, so in praying you may speak unto Him."

May the Lord's people be thankful, for God hath from the beginning chosen them unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. You see the love of God the Father, in your election; you see the love of God the Son, in your redemption; and you see the love of God the Holy Ghost, in your regeneration and sanctification. By the Spirit you have been called and taught. He has given you life, and light, and comfort, and joy, and peace. He has sealed you unto the day of redemption.

ROMANISM.

THE CHURCH OF ROME HAS DEPARTED FROM THE TEACHING OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES, AND FROM THE PRACTICE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

A LECTURE,

DELIVERED AT MONMOUTH,

ON TUESDAY EVENING, THE 17TH OF JULY, 1860.

THE Church of England, and, with her, all reformed Churches, vindicate their separation from the Church of Rome, by showing that, the Church of Rome has departed from the teaching of Christ and His apostles, and from the practice of the primitive Church. It is no light thing to bring a charge against a professing Christian Church; and to say that, many of her doctrines are unscriptural, many of her principles are cruel and anti-social, and many of her ceremonies are idolatrous.

As the Hebrew Church fell into idolatry, so the Christian Church has also fallen into idolatry. The idolatry of the Hebrew Church was predicted by Moses;* and the idolatry of the Christian Church has been predicted by the apostles Paul, and Peter, and John.†

I would here observe that, the British Church may, probably, date its origin from the second, if not from the latter end of the first century. The Gospel was first preached in Britain, as some suppose, by St. Paul, or, as others suppose, by Joseph of Arimathea. The novel, and therefore unscriptural doctrines, which were

* Deut. xxxi. 16.

† 2 Thess. ii. 3, 12; 1 Tim. iv. 1-3; 2 Peter ii.; 1 John iv. 1-3.

afterwards brought from Rome, the British Church might well reject in later times; when she had the power, and the wisdom, and the grace so to do. This was done at the beginning of the sixteenth century. A reformation of religion had long been desired, both on the continent of Europe and in England. The Holy Scriptures (though the Bible was a forbidden book) were translated and made known by Wickliffe and his followers. In this way, sparks of truth were struck, and they gave much light; and the seeds of truth were sown, and they brought forth much fruit. Luther, on the continent, and the English martyrs, were God's chosen instruments for lighting that fire which, Latimer said, by the grace of God should never be put out. Hence our separation from Rome—hence our protest against Rome—hence our civil and religious liberty—hence the great blessings enjoyed by our country, and which blessings we desire to communicate to the whole family of man. God has, indeed, greatly blessed our country, and given to her the first place among the nations of the earth. She is set as a city upon a hill, and as a candle upon a candlestick, that she may shed the light of truth and science upon all lands. My aim in this lecture will be to show that, the Church of Rome has departed from the teaching of Christ and His apostles, and from the practice of the primitive Church: and this I shall do, by contrasting the acknowledged doctrines of the Church of Rome with the word of God, as contained in the Douay Bible.

1. I shall show, in the first place, that the Church of Rome has departed from the teaching of Christ and His apostles: because the Church of Rome forbids the reading of the Holy Scriptures. Christ said, as we read in

the Douay Bible, "Search the Scriptures." The Church of Rome says, in a note on this text (John v. 39), "It is not a command for all to read the Scriptures." And, therefore, in the year 1229, a canon was made by the Council of Toulouse in these words:* "We also forbid the laity to possess any of the books of the Old or New Testament, except perhaps some one out of devotion wishes to have the Psalter or Breviary for the divine offices, or the Hours of the Blessed Virgin. But we strictly forbid them, having any of these books translated into the vulgar tongue."† In the year 1415, in the reign of Henry V. of Monmouth, a Parliament was held at Leicester, and it was forbidden to all persons to read the Scriptures, in the mother tongue; and those who would dare to do so were first to be hanged for treason against the King, and then to be burned for heresy against God. The Saviour says, "Search the Scriptures." The Church of Rome says, Ye shall not search the Scriptures, except ye obtain permission from your pastors. He, who believes that he has power to permit, will also believe that he has power to prohibit. And, therefore, in the exercise of this assumed and usurped power, *the right* to have and to read the Holy Scriptures is entirely denied to the lay members of the Church of Rome. We read in the preface to the Douay New Testament, published in 1633, these words:—"The order, which many a wise man wished for before, was taken by the Deputies of the late famous Council of Trent, in this behalf, and was confirmed by supreme authority, that the Holy Scriptures, though truly and catholickly translated into the vulgar tongues, yet may not be indifferently

* Townley's Biblical Literature, vol. i., p. 446.

† Ibid., vol. ii., p. 79.

read of all men, nor of any other than such as have express licence thereunto of their lawful ordinaries, with good testimony from their curates, or confessors, that they be humble, discreet, and devout persons, and like to take good and no harm hereby."

The use of the Holy Scriptures was not forbidden, under the Old Testament Dispensation. The Law and the Prophets were read in the temple and in the synagogues; and the people, if they could obtain copies, might do so. It was commanded that the King should write him a copy of the Law, in a book out of that which was before the Priests the Levites, and that he was to read therein all the days of his life. The Jews were said to err, because they knew not the Scriptures. They had the Scriptures, but they neglected them. Abraham said,—"They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them." There is no evidence to show that the Scriptures were withheld from the people in the early ages of the Christian Church. The Bereans searched the Scriptures daily. We find the following passage in the first epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, written at the close of the first century:—"Ye know, beloved, ye know full well, the Holy Scriptures, and *have thoroughly searched into the oracles of God.*" Again he says,—"*Look into the Holy Scriptures*, which are the true words of the Holy Ghost." Polycarp, who is said to have been a disciple of the apostle John, thus wrote to the Philippians:—"I trust that ye are well exercised in the Holy Scriptures." Chrysostom, who lived at the end of the fourth century, earnestly urged upon his hearers the reading of the Scriptures. He says,* "The

* Sketch of Romish Controversy, vol. ii., pp. 278-299, by George Finch, Esq., late M.P.

reading of the divine Scriptures, my beloved, is a great good. Wherefore I exhort you practise the reading of the divine Scriptures with all possible haste. The Lord himself from above entering our hearts will enlighten our minds, illuminate our reason, reveal those things that are hidden. Let us then practise the reading with much circumspection and with much attention, *in order that we may be guided by the Holy Spirit.* He did not say read, but 'search the Scriptures,' since the things which are said of Him require much research. For this reason He also now *commands* them to dig through with diligence, that they may be able to discover the things which lie deep."

Is it not evident that I have truth on my side, when I assert that the Church of Rome has departed from the teaching of Christ and His apostles, and from the practice of the primitive Church; since, in opposition to the command of Christ, the Church of Rome says, ye shall not read the Scriptures, unless with the permission of your ordinary and pastor; and then ye are to be guided by the interpretation, which the Church of Rome declares to be the meaning of the Scriptures. Thus, when ye read in the Scriptures,* "thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image," ye are not to suppose that it is forbidden to have images, pictures, or representations, even in the house of God. So when ye read, "Search the Scriptures," ye must remember that the Church says, in a note on that text, "It is not a command for all to read the Scriptures." In fact, the question now asked is not that question, which was asked by the great Teacher, who came from God, "What saith the Scrip-

* Exodus xx.—Douay Bible.

tures?" but the question is, according to Romish teaching,—"What saith the Church?"

The Saviour said, "Search the Scriptures;" and Chrysostom, in the fourth century, read the passage in the imperative, and not in the indicative mood; and so, it would appear, did the Church of Rome in 1633. In a note affixed to the text it is said, "Catholics read the Scriptures, and find there Peter and his successors' primacy, the real Presence, the priests' power to forgive sins, justification by faith and good works, virginity preferred before matrimony, breach of the vow of continence damnable, voluntary poverty, penance, alms and good deeds meritorious, divers rewards in heaven according to divers merits, and such like." But we find it asserted in the Douay Bible of the present day—"It is not a command for all to read the Scriptures."

Have I not proved the truth of this proposition, that the Church of Rome has departed from the teaching of Christ and His apostles, and from the practice of the primitive Church, by forbidding the laity to read the Holy Scriptures? Christ said, "Search the Scriptures." Chrysostom said, Christ did not say, read, but search the Scriptures; and He commanded to dig through with diligence, *in order that we may be guided by the Holy Spirit.* The Church of Rome, from the year 1229 to the year 1860, has discouraged, disallowed, and forbidden the reading of the Scriptures, unless permission be first obtained from priest and bishop. Christ—our blessed Lord and Saviour,—the Son of God, said, "SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES." And what right has any man, or any body of men, or any Church, to say, "Ye shall not search the Scriptures"? Why should I be told that I am not to see the prescription, which the

physician has written for my benefit? Why should the executor keep back and not suffer me to see the will and testament, in which I have a beneficial interest? Why should the trustee forbid the wife to see her marriage settlement? Why should any man interfere with my right to have, and to read, the Word of God? Why should any man keep back from me that blessed book, which contains these matchless words—as full of beauty, as they are full of grace:—"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."* The Bishop of Rome withholds the Word of God. The Bishop of Rome places himself between man and God. The Bishop of Rome places the Virgin Mary between the sinner and the Saviour.

2. In the second place, I observe that the Church of Rome has departed from the teaching of Christ and His apostles, and from the practice of the primitive Church, in the matter of the Holy Communion. Christ said, when He gave the cup, "*Drink ye all of this.*"† But the Church of Rome withholds the cup from the laity, and attempts to justify her action by this note in the Douay Bible:—"It noways follows from these words spoken to the apostles that all the faithful are here commanded to drink of the chalice." But, I would ask, what was the practice of the primitive Church? Does not the apostle, in writing to the Church at Corinth, assume that all the faithful did drink of the cup? The apostle says—"As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."‡ It is true that, in the following

* Luke ii. 10. † Matt. xxvii. 27. ‡ 1 Cor. xi. 26.

verse, the Douay Bible reads—"or drink." The Vulgate, however, reads "and drink." The word is not *aut*; the word is *et*. And this reading of the Vulgate is supported by the Alexandrian, Cambridge, Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Coptic versions. But it makes no real difference. If we read—"or drink," that reading shows that it was permitted to the faithful at Corinth to drink of the cup.

It is worthy of remark that we find a various reading in some Greek MSS., that is not in the *textus receptus*, but is found in the Vulgate. In 1 Cor. x. 17, we read, —"Omnes qui de uno pane et de uno calice participamus," We are all partakers of one bread and *of one cup*. The Douay Bible professes to be a translation from the Vulgate; but as the Vulgate is opposed to the practice of the Church of Rome, the Douay Bible, in this instance, departs from the Vulgate. What right has the Church of Rome to withhold the cup from the laity? Is not the wine in that cup the figure of that blood which has been the price of our redemption, and which cleanseth us from all sin? Did not the Saviour say,—"This is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you"? Do we not find in the Holy Scriptures that the greatest stress is laid both upon the type and the antitype? The Paschal lamb was a type of Jesus, the Son of God. The blood of the Paschal lamb was to be sprinkled upon the houses belonging to the Israelites, in order to their preservation. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;" and Jesus said, when He gave the cup, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

In 1 Cor. xi. 28, it is said, "Let a man examine himself; and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." The Church of Rome says, in a note on this text, "This is not by way of command, but by way of allow-

ance, viz., where and when it is agreeable to the practice and discipline of the Church." It may not be agreeable to the practice and discipline of the Church of Rome to give the cup to the laity; but, surely, we may challenge the Church of Rome to prove, from the Holy Scriptures, that it is not in accordance with the command of Christ, nor with the language of the apostle Paul, that all the faithful should receive the cup, as well as the bread, in the Supper of the Lord.

I feel assured that I have established the truth of my second proposition. The Church of Rome has departed from the teaching of Christ and His apostles, and from the practice of the primitive Church, by withholding the cup from the laity in the sacrifice of the mass; and, therefore, since the sacrifice of the mass is not according to the institution of Christ, *the sacrifice of the mass is not the Supper of the Lord.*

The Saviour said that He came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. The Bishop of Rome destroys both the bodies and the souls of men. He destroys their souls by error; and he destroys their bodies, when he can do so, by the sword of the civil magistrate. The Church of Rome claims this power as a right belonging to the Church. We have the following note in the Douay Bible:—"Here we see what authority God was pleased to give to the Church guides of the Old Testament, in deciding, without appeal, all controversies relating to the law, promising that they should not err therein. And surely He has not done less for the guides of the New Testament." What authority, we may ask, did God give to the guides of the Old Testament? In the seventeenth chapter of Deuteronomy, we read that if any matter of controversy arose among the people of

Israel, they were to go to the priest, who should be in those days and inquire, and the man that would do presumptuously, and would not hearken unto the priest, that man was to be put to death. But where, we may ask, can the shadow of a pretence be found in the New Testament, that any such power has been given to the ministers of Jesus Christ? We do, indeed, read of a beast that was to rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his head the name of blasphemy. We read that this beast was to make war with the saints; and was to be drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. Again we read (the figure being changed) that this antichristian and persecuting power is spoken of as a woman "arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, having a gold cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."* The seven heads are explained as signifying seven mountains; and the woman sitting upon the seven mountains is said to be that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth. The priests of this mystical Babylon, this city and Church of Rome, claim for the guides of the New Testament the power to put to death all those persons, who renounce the authority, and abjure the religion of the Bishop of Rome. Hence the origin of the Inquisition—hence the cruel death, by fire, of so many godly persons in the reign of Queen Mary—hence the horrible massacre in France, approved and sanctioned by the

* Rev. xvii. 5.

Bishop of Rome—hence the slaughter of the Waldenses, that cruel slaughter, which has received deathless fame, by Milton, in this sonnet:—

> Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
> Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold;
> Ev'n them who kept Thy truth so pure of old
> When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones.
> Forget not: in Thy book record their groans
> Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
> Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that roll'd
> Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moan
> The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
> To Heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
> O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
> The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
> A hundredfold, who, having learn'd Thy way,
> Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

Bless, and curse not, said Jesus. Who is the great curser but the Bishop of Rome? Who sent forth his curse against Queen Elizabeth? Who sends forth his curses against the readers of the Holy Scriptures? Who sent forth his curse against the King of Sardinia? Who would, at this moment, purge every diocese of England and Wales and Ireland, by fire and sword, from all baptised persons who have not received the mark of the beast in their hand, or in their foreheads? I answer—with the Bible in my hand—the Bishop of Rome. I answer, without any hesitation—echoing the testimony of history from her ten thousand pages—the Bishop of Rome. I answer—holding this book in my hand, without any fear of contradiction—the Bishop of Rome. I have here the Diocesan Statutes of the Roman Catholic bishops of the Province of Leinster. Those statutes are founded upon the persecuting canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, and showing that those bishops adopted

Den's Theology as the standard for the instruction of the Roman Catholics of Ireland *in the year* 1832. This is the third canon of the Fourth Lateran Council:—"We excommunicate and anathematise every heresy which exalteth itself against this holy, orthodox, and catholic faith, which we have set forth above: condemning all heretics, by whatsoever names they may be recognised. Let such persons, when condemned, be left to the secular powers who may be present, or to their officers, to be punished in a fitting manner. And let the secular powers, whatever offices they may hold, be induced and admonished, and if need be, compelled by ecclesiastical censures, that as they desire to be accounted faithful, they should, for the defence of the faith, publicly set forth on oath, that to the utmost of their power they will strive to exterminate from the lands under their jurisdiction all heretics who shall be denounced by the Church; so that whensoever any person is advanced, either to spiritual or temporal power, he be bound to confirm this decree with an oath. But if any temporal lord, being required and admonished by the Church, shall neglect to cleanse his country of this heretical filth, let him be bound by the chain of excommunication by the metropolitan and the other co-provincial bishops." You have, no doubt, noticed the term *exterminate,* employed in the canon of the Fourth Council of Lateran. The word "exterminate" means, as Johnson says, "To root out; to tear up; to drive away; to abolish; to destroy. Oh! is this the spirit of the Gospel? Does this accord with the teaching of Christ and His apostles? What said Christ? "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them which despite-

fully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

An argument against the Church of England, and in favour of the Church of Rome, is sought to be derived from the fact that hundreds of the clergy and nobility and gentry have gone over, it is said, to the Church of Rome. I cannot say how many persons have gone over to the Church of Rome in England; but I do know that, during the last few years, thousands and tens of thousands of persons have forsaken the Church of Rome in Ireland, and in Belgium, and in France, and in Italy, and in America; and in all countries in which the Holy Scriptures have been circulated and read. I admit that those persons, who have gone over to the Church of Rome in England, have been chiefly from the higher and educated classes of society; while the middle class has remained true and faithful to our ancient, and reformed, and scriptural faith, as held by the National and Protestant Church of England. But what inference do I draw from this admitted fact? This inference—that the middle class has been better instructed in the Word of God; and, therefore, is better prepared to resist the sophistry, and artifice, and fraud of Rome. The study of classical literature, highly as it is to be valued, may lead, unless sanctified by the Word of God and prayer, not only to Rome, but to paganism. It was remarked by that grear scholar, Erasmus, in the year 1516,—"I have my fears that with the study of ancient literature we may see the return of ancient paganism." And what, I would ask, is Romanism, but paganism endorsed with Christian names? Let any one read a letter writ-

ten from Rome, at the beginning of the last century, by another great scholar, Dr. Conyers Middleton, and he will there find ample proof of the truth of this assertion. Dr. Middleton undertook to show that there is "an exact conformity between popery and paganism: and that the religion of the present Romans is derived from that of their heathen ancestors." And Dr. Middleton has shown, by a careful comparison of the religion of the Church of Rome, with the religion of pagan Rome, that the use of incense, and holy water, and lamps, and candles before the shrines and images of the saints, and offerings and votive gifts, have all been derived from pagan Rome.

The descent is very easy, and may be very rapid, from the study of heathen classics to the adoption of heathen ceremonies. Our great men and our scholars have read the poets and historians, the orators and philosophers, of Greece and Rome; but have they read those Holy Scriptures, which have been given by inspiration of God? When, I ask, have they read them? I mean, have they studied the Holy Scriptures? Have they searched the Scriptures, as for hid treasures? Have they asked for the teaching of the Holy Spirit? Have they cried to God, in prayer,—"Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." If they have not, need we be surprised that they have gone back to ancient paganism? It may indeed be said that, some of the perverts have searched the Scriptures, and that they have not neglected prayer. Be it so. We read in the Bible that some of understanding shall fall, and we also read that some have fallen. We read that Aaron the high priest fell, when he complied with the request of the Israelites, who said, Make us gods to go before us. "And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacri-

fice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the work of their own hands." Solomon fell, when he went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites, and Chemosh, the abomination of the Moabites. And we say that Rome has fallen, in like manner, because she worships the wafer,* and the cross,† and the Virgin Mary;‡ and we say that those persons who unite with Rome in her idolatrous worship have also greatly and grievously fallen.

Dr. Middleton says, "As to that celebrated act of popish idolatry, *the adoration of the Host,* I must confess that I cannot find the least resemblance or similitude of it in any part of the pagan worship; and as often as I have been standing by at mass, and seen the whole congregation prostrate on the ground, in the humblest posture of adoring *at the elevation of this consecrated piece of bread,* I could not help reflecting on a passage of Tully, when speaking of the absurdity of the heathens in the choice of their gods: 'But was any man,' said he, 'ever so mad as to take that, which he feeds upon for a god?' This was an extravagance reserved for popery alone; and what an old *Roman* could not but think too gross for *Egyptian idolatry* to swallow, is now become the principal part of worship, and the distinguishing article of faith, in the creed of modern Rome."

We have heard from Erasmus that he entertained great fears lest there should be a pagan relapse in the Christian Church; and we have now heard, from Dr.

* Dr. Middleton's letter from Rome.

† Tracts upon the leading errors of the Church of Rome, or the adoration of the Cross. By the late Rev. G. Hamilton, M A.

‡ Any book of devotion of the Romanists, and especially the Manual of the living Rosary of the Blessed Virgin.

Middleton that, such a relapse has actually taken place in the Church of Rome.

Such accusations against Rome are denied by Romanists, and those passages of Scripture that we apply to the Church of Rome, Romanists apply to the Protestant Reformation. But who, let me ask, forbids the reading of the Scriptures? Who denies the cup to the laity? Who has added the creed of Pope Pius IV. to the creed of the Christian Church? Which Church, whether that of England, or that of Rome, has found it necessary, in consequence of the worship of images and pictures, to cancel, and to expunge from some catechisms, one of those commandments which had been written by the finger of God? What Church teaches her members to address the Virgin Mary, in these words,—"Hail! holy Queen, mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness, our hope;" without any authority from the Word of God so to do; and in opposition to the practice of the Christian Church for more than four hundred years? Who has increased the number of mediators from the "*one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,*"* to hundreds, and thousands, and tens of thousands? Who has forged canons, and calls them apostolic?† Who has interpolated the Fathers, and called them genuine?‡ Who has adopted, as an axiom, that impious falsehood that ignorance is the mother of devotion? Who has shed the blood of saints, and seeks to justify the atrocious deed, by saying that, the blood of heretics is no more than the blood of thieves, and man-

* 1 Tim. ii. 5.

† Dean Comber's Friendly and Seasonable advice to the Roman Catholics of England, section iii. Burnet on the Thirty-nine Articles, Article xxxvii.

‡ Dean Comber, section iii.

killers, and other malefactors?* Who claims for the guides of the New Testament the power to put to death, all persons, who disobey the priests and bishops of the Church of Rome?† According to Llorente, the historian of the Spanish Inquisition, 31,912 persons had been condemned and burnt in Spain, from the year 1418 down to his time, about the year 1806.

I would here remark that, the history of the papacy compels us to regard that antichristian system, as a vast political and ecclesiastical confederacy and conspiracy, in order to establish an universal monarchy of priestly power—to exalt the clergy—to enslave the people—to fill with gold and silver the exchequer of the Pope, and to bring all nations into subjection to "the man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."‡ Will it be said that this language is too strong? Let me entreat you to look at Italy. See the Pope's own subjects, the Italians, rising up against him, and seeking to free themselves from the crushing tyranny of the papacy.

Much has been unjustly said by Romanists against the authorised version. It has been alleged that the authorised version is neither correct nor complete; that is, I suppose, that the authorised version does not contain all the books of the Holy Scriptures, and that it is not a faithful translation. With regard to the first allegation, I would observe that we receive, as the in-

* Douay Bible, Rev. xvii. 6, Note.

† Douay Bible, Deut. xvii. 8, Note.

‡ 2 Thess. ii. 4, 5. Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, vol. ii., page 396. Third edition.

spired Word of God, those books which were received by the Jews: and that we reject from the canon of the Holy Scriptures those, books which the Jews did reject. In the list of the Apocryphal books, at the beginning of the Vulgate Bible, it is said of those books,—"Libri sequentes *non sunt* in canone Hebræo." Hartwell Horne observes, "In the preceding catalogue of canonical books Jerome has given them just as they stand in our English Bibles; that is, he has given the canon recognised by all Protestant Churches, not the canon made by the modern Church of Rome, on the 8th of April, in the year 1546; that is, only 1,154 years after the time of Jerome."

The second allegation is thus expressed in the preface to the Douay New Testament:—"Protestants, and such as St. Paul calleth *walking in deceitfulness,* have so abused the people, and many other in the world, not unwise, that by their false translations they have, instead of God's Law and Testament, and for Christ's written will and word, given them their own wicked writing and phantasies, most shamefully in all their versions, Latin, English, and other tongues, corrupting both the letter and sense by a false translation, adding, detracting, altering, transposing, pointing, and all other guileful means: specially when it serveth for their private opinions."

In reply to this accusation let us hear the testimony of Dr. Geddes. This gentleman was, at least at one period, a Romish priest; and was a person of considerable literary attainments. He observes,—"The highest eulogiums have been made on the translation of James the First. And, indeed, if accuracy, and fidelity, and the strictest attention to the letter of the text, be sup-

posed to form the qualifications of an excellent version, *this of all the versions must in general be accounted the most excellent.* Every sentence, every word, every syllable, every letter and point, seems to have been weighed with the nicest exactitude, and expressed, either in the text or in the margin, with the greatest precision. Pagninus himself is hardly more literal; and it was well observed by Robertson, above one hundred years ago, that it may serve for a lexicon of the Hebrew language as well as for a translation." I would ask, should this book be called the devil's book, as Romanists do call it? Should it be said that this book contains poisonous pastures? Was it right for the Redemptorist fathers to burn this book? Is it doing God service for Romish priests to take up this book with a pair of tongs, and to put this book in the fire? We must, however, allow that such persons are consistent. It would seem as if they would extinguish every light, that they might have universal darkness. Or else, why did the Inquisition persecute Galileo, and place him in a dungeon, when he asserted this great physical truth, that the earth moves round the sun?

It has been said that every new edition of the Douay Bible has approximated nearer to the authorised version. The truth of this assertion has been denied. That such an approximation has taken place I can prove to demonstration. I have before me copies of the Roman Catholic Bible bearing the dates 1582 and 1846. Let us compare these books with the authorised version. Every chapter, I believe, will afford evidence that such an approximation has taken place; and thus will prove that, in the estimation of Romanists themselves, our translation is better than theirs.

Authorised Version—Luke xvi. 1, "There was a certain rich man, which had a *steward*, and the same was *accused* unto him that he had wasted his goods."

Romish Version, 1582—"There was a certain rich man that had a *bailiff*, and he was *ill reported* of unto him, as that he had wasted his goods."

Romish Version, 1846—"There was a certain rich man who had a *steward:* and the same was *accused* unto him that he had wasted his goods."

Authorised Version—John x., "I am the good *Shepherd.*"

Romish Version, 1582—"I am the good *Pastor.*"

Romish Version, 1846—"I am the good *Shepherd.*"

Authorised Version—Romans ii. 29, "*He is a Jew* which *is one inwardly.*"

Romish Version, 1582—"He that is in *secret* is a Jew."

Romish Version, 1846—"*He is a Jew* that *is one inwardly.*"

Authorised Version—Galatians iii. 1, "Before whose eyes Jesus Christ *hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you.*"

Romish Version, 1582—"Before whose eyes Jesus Christ was *proscribed,* being crucified among you."

Romish Version, 1846—"Before whose eyes Jesus Christ *hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you.*"

Authorised Version—1 Cor. iv. 15, "Ye *have ten thousand instructors in Christ.*"

Romish Version, 1582—"You have ten thousand pedagogues in Christ."

Romish Version, 1846—"You *have ten thousand instructors in Christ.*"

Authorised Version—Gal. iv. 13, "*Received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.*"

Romish Version, 1582—"As an angel of God you received me, even as Christ Jesus."

Romish Version, 1846—"*Received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.*"

Authorised Version—Gal. v. 16, 17, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, *and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.* For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: *and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* 19, Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, *drunkenness, revellings,* and such like: 25, If we live in the Spirit, *let us also walk in the Spirit.*"

Romish Version, 1582—"And I say, walk in the Spirit, and the lusts of the flesh you shall not accomplish. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, for these are adversaries one to another: that what things soever you will not, these you do. 19, And the works of the flesh be manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, impudicitie, lecherie, serving of idols, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, emulations, angers, brawls, dissensions, sectes, envies, murders, ebrieties, commessations, and such like. 25, If we live in the Spirit, in the Spirit also let us walk."

Romish Version, 1846—"I say then, Walk in the Spirit, *and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.* For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit: and the Spirit against the flesh: *for these are contrary one to another; so that you do not the things that you would.* 19, *Now the works of the flesh are manifest,* which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcrafts,

[illegible] *godliness*, [illegible] *godliness*, [illegible] *godliness*, and such like. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

Authorised Version—1 Tim. iii. 16. "*Great is the mystery of godliness.*"

Rheims Version, 1582—"A great sacrament of piety."

Rheims Version, 1846—"*Great is the mystery of godliness.*"

It thus appears, I think, to be quite evident that the accusation which is brought against the authorised version, namely, that it is neither correct nor complete, *cannot be maintained*. Such accusations and bold assertions are quite in keeping with the history of the papacy. It is by asserting that which is false, and by denying that which is true, that popery seeks to maintain its ground. But Romanists will find that this mode of action will not succeed. *Veritas est magna et prevalebit.* We are living in an age of great intelligence, and of rapid communication. Many are running to and fro, and knowledge is increasing. The schoolmaster is abroad: the company of preachers is great: and the Holy Scriptures, perhaps to the extent of one hundred millions of copies, are diffusing their heavenly light upon the dark places of the earth. The printing press (as Sir James Mackintosh observed) has changed the condition of mankind; and, as John Fox said, either the Pope must abolish printing, or printing will abolish the Pope. It is supposed by Romanists that the end will sanctify the means; and therefore bribery, and flattery, and falsehood, and threats, and kidnapping, are employed to pervert the subjects of our most gracious and Protestant Queen. The slave-trade, we know, was

carried on by kidnapping; and those persons who were engaged in that trade were called men-stealers. This has now become the practice of the Popish party in this Protestant realm; and this practice has called forth the following letter from Lord Redesdale to the Secretary of the Society for Irish Church Missions:—

SIR,—Persevering aggression is best resisted by attacking the aggressor, and dishonourable action by honourable activity. I desire to mark my disgust at the means by which certain Roman ecclesiastics, and other members of that Church, have attempted to secure converts to their faith, which have of late been so frequently recorded in the papers. I send you, therefore, a cheque for £50 as a donation to the funds of the Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics, confidently believing that the proceedings of the Society will always be conducted in an honourable and conscientious manner.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
REDESDALE.

I would here express my fervent hope that many persons may be led to follow the noble example of my Lord Redesdale. The Irish Society for Church Missions and the Reformation Society in England have the same important end in view. And that end is, in the one country, to preserve Protestants from the sorcery of Rome, and in the other country, to make Romanists acquainted with their great danger so long as they remain in communion with that Church, *which has so greatly departed from the teaching of Christ and His apostles, and from the practice of the primitive Church.*

Bishop Bull says,—"I am so far from thinking that salvation is to be found only in unity with the Church of Rome, that, on the contrary, I verily believe they are in great danger of their salvation, who live in her communion; that is, who own her erroneous doctrines and join in her corrupt worship."

Archbishop Wake has said: "Popery, in all its colours, is so unlike Christianity that it is in vain ever to hope to promote it if it appears in its own shape. It is necessary, therefore, that this religion be made to look as orthodox as possible. Some things are denied, some are mollified, all disguised; and a double benefit is thereby obtained. Popery is to be received as a very harmless thing; and the Protestants, especially the ministers and first Reformers, are to be represented to the world, as a sort of people that have supported themselves by calumny and lies, and made a noise about errors and corruptions which are nowhere to be found but in their own brains or books; but which the Church of Rome detests as well as we."

Before I conclude, I would remark that, if Roman Catholics desire to possess the old religion of Rome, and the true religion of the Bible, they will find it, I do believe, in our national Church—the United Church of England and Ireland. That Church is ancient. The truth of this proposition cannot be disproved. That Church is Catholic: she holds the Catholic faith. That Church is reformed. By God's special blessing she freed herself, at the period of the Reformation, from the blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits of Rome.* That Church is evangelical. The Gospel (*Evangelium*) of the grace of God, the glad tidings of a free salvation, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; and that salvation received by faith, and the reception of that salvation attested by a holy life, pervades her Articles, her Homilies, and her Liturgy. And, when we consider her ancient episcopacy—her spiritual liturgy—her Scriptural articles—her few and simple

* Article xxxi.

rites and ceremonies — her affection for the sister Churches of the Reformation—her tolerant spirit towards those who have seceded from herself; and, though last, certainly not least, the marked and remarkable blessing of God that has descended upon her in our own days—I would take leave to say that, in my humble opinion, she has a strong claim upon the affection and the attachment of the people of this land. Dean Comber says, addressing Roman Catholics,—"If you would hold the faith of the primitive Roman Church, you may come much nearer to it, by embracing the religion of your own country, than by retaining the opinions of the modern Church of Rome, which are most of them mere innovations; and though you have reverenced them while you have supposed them ancient and apostolical, yet we hope you will now renounce them, when they are evidently discovered to be *Gibeonites*, disguised on purpose to deceive, and (notwithstanding their *mouldy* pretences, as if they had come from far and were descended from ancient times) their true origin is much later and nearer to this present day."

The editor of a work entitled "The Acknowledged Doctrines of the Church of Rome," concludes his preface to that valuable work in these words:—"He would implore all who were looking towards Rome for a revival of ancient Christianity, to ponder well the essential condition of their embracing the Romish faith, that of accepting for Divine commands, not the plain declarations of inspired writers, but the interpretations and decisions of fallible men; of substituting for the simple truths of the Gospel, an elaborate scheme of religion, the tendency of which, as has been abundantly proved, is to perplex, to bewilder, and finally to mislead the mind."

In conclusion, I would observe that much has been said by Romanists, respecting the divisions which prevail amongst Protestants in consequence of the exercise of private judgment. No one can lament more than I do, our unhappy divisions. But, bad as they are, I would rather that such evils did prevail, than that free-born men, and men whom Christ hath made free, should be dragged, as felons, before the Grand Inquisitor-General. I would rather that such evils did prevail than that I should hear of the fires of Smithfield and of Oxford. I would rather that such evils did prevail than have recorded on the imperishable page of history, such appalling facts as these—that in Spain alone 291,912 persons had been subjected to rigorous pains and penance, and that 31,912 persons had been condemned and burnt."*

We have been already exhorted, in a former admirable lecture by Mr. Bosanquet, to lift up our eyes, and to set our hearts and minds upon the Word of God. And this we should do, because the sure word of prophecy has declared that, the Prince of Peace "shall break in pieces the oppressor."† And surely we have reason to believe the time is drawing near, since it is so evident that *the hand of God is heavy upon Rome.*

May the members of that fallen Church hearken to the gracious voice of God, who says, "COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, THAT YE BE NOT PARTAKERS OF HER SINS, AND THAT YE RECEIVE NOT OF HER PLAGUES."‡ And may the members of a Scriptural Church give heed to these words: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."§

* The Encyclopædia Britannica: article, Inquisition.
† Psa. lxxii. ‡ Rev. xviii. 4. § 1 Cor. xvi. 13.

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